

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-FIRST INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS  
ANNAMALAI INAGAR 1956

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OF  
THE THIRTY-FIRST  
INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS  
ANNAMALAINAGAR  
1956**

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

The Volume contains Three parts :

Part I contains Presidential Addresses.

Part II contains Symposia.

Part III Selected Papers read before the various Sections.

Papers submitted late and not included in the Proceedings will be submitted to the Editor, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Amalner.

N. A. NIKAM,  
Secretary.

*Contents on cover page three*

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**Part I**  
**PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES**

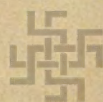
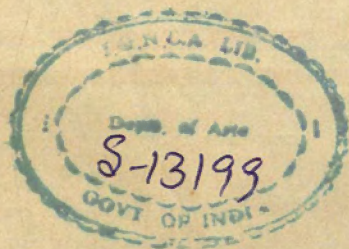




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THE  
INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL CONGRESS

(31st Session at Annamalainagar, 1956)

What is Philosophy?

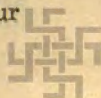
*Presidential Address*

*by*

RASVIHARY DAS

I am grateful to the authorities of the Indian Philosophical Congress for the great honour they have done me, by asking me to preside over this assembly of philosophers. Indeed, the burden of the honour would have been too heavy, if it were not lightened by my idea that the honour is perhaps a compliment paid to my advancing years, in recognition of my fairly regular attendance at the congress sessions, or, more probably, an expression of affection for me of my friends on the Executive Committee. For, sincerely speaking, I am not aware of any philosophical merit in me which would justify this honour. I have not contributed any new idea to the stock of philosophical ideas of the world, nor can I say that I have given any kind of lead to the philosophical thinking of my own country. So, if there is, in any quarters, any expectation of a significant contribution to philosophical thought from my presidential address, I am sorry to have to belie that expectation.

However, I flatter myself to think that I have genuinely tried, with my limited powers, to keep alive the spirit of philosophical enquiry among my students and friends and thus to prepare and maintain, within a restricted area, an intellectual atmosphere, favourable to the reception of philosophical light from the past as well as to its propagation to the succeeding generation, although I have lacked the capacity to add anything of my own to that light. If, then, on the present occasion, following the general tenor of my philosophical career, I engage myself in an enquiry which has been of some special interest to me in recent years, I hope I shall not be taken amiss. I propose to ask myself and other philosophers assembled here some questions regarding the specific nature of our





work as philosophers. I am struck by the great variety and diversity of the work which is generally recognised as philosophical in histories of philosophy, but which is so diverse and different that the propriety of a common name, which it bears, appears more than doubtful. I am therefore not at all ashamed if, after years of philosophical study, I am still puzzled as to what the philosophers do, or should do, in their capacity as philosophers.

It is generally assumed that philosophy is a pursuit of knowledge. But so is every natural or social science, and even history. If both science and philosophy are concerned to give us knowledge, then how is philosophy to be distinguished from science? It is no good supposing that philosophy gives us knowledge of reality and science gives us knowledge of appearance, because knowledge of appearance, as every candid person will recognise, is no knowledge at all, and nobody supposes that science gives us no knowledge. We cannot also suppose that philosophy gives us knowledge of the whole, while science gives us knowledge of the parts of reality, because we cannot know the whole without knowing the parts and in knowing the whole we know the parts also, so that either philosophy would be impossible (without science) or science would be unnecessary. Moreover, where is the philosopher (or even the scientist) who will properly know the results of all the sciences and will thus be in a position to synthesise them? We cannot even suppose that science knows reality by one method, i.e., by observation and experiment, and philosophy knows it by another method, i.e., by pure thinking. For it is highly doubtful whether one and the same thing can be known by such different methods, especially whether what is specifically known by observation and experiment can at all be known by mere thinking. May we not suppose that we have one kind of knowledge in science and another kind in philosophy? *Prima facie*, at least, this seems hardly possible, because in knowledge, in the straight-forward sense of the term, we cannot make any distinction of kind. Knowledge is one and unique. (The term knowledge represents an ultimate and fundamental notion and cannot properly be defined. We mean by it awareness or apprehension of some objective reality. It may be described as a revelation of reality as it is in itself).

But although knowledge is one and unique, the object of knowledge, i.e., reality, may be endlessly complex, and constituted as we are, we may be utterly incapable of apprehending reality in its totality in any one act of knowledge. What is revealed in one act may be only an aspect or a minute part of reality. In such a



case, we may well speak of knowledge as growing from more to more, as the poet wished. An imponderable and insubstantial thing like knowledge cannot, of course, grow in bulk or weight, but more and more of the parts or aspects of reality may gradually come within our intelligent grasp. I believe science is committed to this view of knowledge, and it can well sustain its legitimate claim that it is everyday making a fresh addition to our knowledge.

Certain consequences follow from this view of scientific knowledge; first, earlier knowledge is rendered almost useless by later knowledge, and so it is most important in science to be up-to-date; and, secondly, science represents the co-operative work of many scientists.

Philosophy certainly does not represent any growing body of knowledge as science does. Our old philosophers, when they are genuinely such, never become out of date. Aristotelian science provides only amusement to a modern scientist, but a student of philosophy is ever ready to turn to Aristotle for inspiration and instruction. As for co-operation among philosophers, it is hardly to be thought of at all. The fact is that a philosopher may, and does, learn from others as much as he can, but what he gives to the world as his philosophy is peculiarly his own. Philosophy in this respect seems alike to religion and poetry.

When we consider the ideal which science pursues and the ideal or ideals which philosophy has sought to realise in different ages and in different lands, there remains hardly any doubt as to the difference between science and philosophy. Science, I believe, is inspired by the Greek ideal of knowledge for its own sake. Curiosity is its motive, and mere knowledge, and nothing further, is its avowed goal. It has to be admitted, however, that in ancient Greece philosophy was indistinguishable from science, but in its developed form, even Greek philosophy could hardly be contained within any rigid scientific frame. No mere scientific enquiry, or strictly scientific reasoning, could ever lead to what Plato or Aristotle achieved as the highest fruit of his philosophic reflection. People became early conscious of the distinction between the scientific and the philosophic aim. If science aimed at knowledge (*wissen*), pure and simple, philosophy was supposed to give us wisdom (*weisheit*), which was more than mere knowledge.

In a later period Stoics and others pursued philosophy expressly as an art of life (*lebenskunst*). In medieval period philosophy was consciously made a handmaid to theology, and was valued,



not for the sake of knowledge, merely as such, but for the light it would throw on religious objects, i.e., for a special kind of enlightenment which would be helpful in our religious pursuits.

People no doubt sought knowledge from philosophy, but not for its own sake, as in science, but for the sake of some higher interests. We find it particularly evident in Indian philosophy. Curiosity was never a motive in philosophical enquiries in India. Philosophy here arose from a sense of pain, or a sense of dissatisfaction with our everyday life in the world, and was adopted as a means to raise ourselves to a higher plane of existence. What was sought in philosophy was no doubt nothing but knowledge, but not knowledge for its own sake, but for the sake of a higher form of existence, liberation or freedom. It is thus clear to me that the aim of philosophy is quite different from the aim of science and they should be recognised as quite distinct disciplines.

Nevertheless science enjoys enormous prestige today, and there are half-baked philosophers who would keep philosophy always in close association with science. If philosophy is not science, they say, it is at least concerned to clarify the concepts of science, or bring out, and examine, the presuppositions of science. I should rather suppose that a scientist alone would be competent to clarify the concepts he uses, and it is again a scientist, with a gift for critical reflection, who would be competent to draw out the presuppositions, on which scientific thinking is based. A mere philosopher, without any serious scientific training, would be a mere dabbler in this kind of work. The above view of philosophy really makes philosophy dependent on science, and forgets that there was philosophy when there was no science, and there are many competent philosophers, even now, who are innocent of science.

Some people think that in the beginning philosophy was incompetently dealing with all kinds of problems, many of which have now become the objects of scientific enquiry and have received their proper treatment. With the growth of science, more and more of these problems are coming within the purview of scientific research, so that the proper concern of philosophy today is with those objects of theoretical interest, which have not yet become amenable to scientific treatment. The idea seems to be that when, with the development of human knowledge and ingenuity, the objects of present-day philosophic enquiry are appropriated by science, there will then be no need of any philosophy. This appears to be the view of those who have unbounded admi-

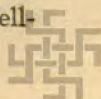


ration for science but no genuine understanding of philosophy. It is only pseudo-philosophy, which has lost respect for itself, that will be content to subsist on the leavings of science or try to fulfil itself by rendering some gratuitous service to science.

It is however not to be supposed that there is any antagonism between science and philosophy, that a scientist cannot be a philosopher. The philosophical activity essentially consists, as we shall try to maintain, in critical reflection. Such reflection is a privilege, and perhaps also a duty, of every rational human being. A scientist, while carrying on his scientific work, may also reflect on what he is doing, and such reflection may result in the clarification of scientific concepts, or bring to light certain far-reaching assumptions of scientific thinking. This would be a very valuable work, which we should associate with the name of the philosophy of science. But it would be a mistake to identify philosophy as such with the philosophy of science, which is at best only a branch of philosophy. It is thus clear that philosophy is quite distinct from science and has nothing to do with the latter, except in that branch of it, which is called the philosophy of science. If philosophy is concerned with the presuppositions of science, it is at least equally concerned with the foundations of religious belief or of ethical conduct.

If philosophy is distinct from science, then it is easy to understand that philosophy does not provide the kind of knowledge which science provides. And if by knowledge, properly so called, we understand merely scientific knowledge, then we should clearly say that philosophy does not give us any knowledge at all. How is this position to be reconciled with the almost universal belief that philosophy is concerned to give us knowledge? Even those, who take to philosophy with a view to the attainment of liberation or freedom, believe that the attainment is made possible through knowledge, provided by philosophy. Whether philosophy actually gives us knowledge or not, it is no doubt true that we seek knowledge in some sense through philosophising. We have now to find out how the knowledge which philosophy seeks is different from the scientific knowledge.

It is sometimes said that what philosophy gives us is not mere knowledge but understanding or wisdom. Scientific knowledge is expressible in definite propositions and is communicable, as Prof. K. C. Bhattacharya used to say, as information. We do not seek information in philosophy and the philosopher need not be a well-



informed man. When we say there is a deep understanding between two friends, we do not mean that one of them can assert a good many propositions about the other, but that they can also act and feel towards each other in an appropriate way. Similarly a wise man need not claim a high degree of theoretical intelligence which is the instrument of scientific knowledge, but appears to possess a highly quickened, intuitive and instinctive apprehension of things in general. I must however confess that I have no clear notion as to what understanding in this sense or wisdom exactly means. I must therefore try some other way of distinguishing philosophical knowledge, if there be any such, from scientific knowledge.

In science, the knower is conceived as a passive spectator, and his intellect alone, apart from feeling and will, is concerned in scientific knowledge. Science, then, if it is ever satisfactory as a spiritual venture, can satisfy only one side of our being. We are not mere intellect, but feeling and will as well. Our personality is an integrated unity, and when we seek knowledge, as we do in philosophy, we seek it with our whole being, and when it is attained, it should satisfy our total personality. Philosophical knowledge, then, must be satisfactory in some sense and capable of being lived and of being helpful in life. To demand satisfaction and helpfulness from knowledge is to bring it in intimate relationship with feeling and will.

The subject, which is concerned in scientific knowledge, is a ghostly spectator, who is not visible at all, and does not count. The subject in philosophy is the dominant partner in the game. And so while science is the same for all, philosophy is different for different individuals and no one is any the worse for it.

Every thoughtful person manages, however imperfectly and provisionally, to achieve a view of the world and of his place in it, which appears to his understanding rational and satisfies his emotional and volitional nature. This represents his philosophy, which may or may not satisfy the standard of scientific thinking or knowledge, but is not essentially worse than any scientific knowledge which also, as we have seen, is always provisional and probable and never final.

In this view, almost everybody is credited with a kind of elementary philosophy. But everybody is not called a philosopher. Everybody does not take equal care to form a self-consistent view of the world and of his place in it. Only those who have taken



particular care to form a self-consistent and comprehensive view of the world, after a careful examination of the different aspects and spheres of their experience, have a special title to the name philosopher. But the view they arrive at is only a result of their thoughtful efforts. There may be some, (I believe, many), who, even after expending most serious thought on their life and experience, cannot succeed in forming a self-consistent view of the world which would satisfy their critical judgment. They may even come to think that success, or complete success, in this kind of endeavour, is not to be attained with our limited capacity. They are the sceptics and agnostics who also are called philosophers, because, I believe, their efforts have something in common with those of the other philosophers who succeed in giving us a positive view of the world and of man. We now come face to face with our major question:—‘What is it really that makes a philosopher?’ or ‘What is essentially the characteristic philosophic act?’

In trying to answer this question, we should remember at least two points: (i) that our definition of philosophy should hold good of the work of all recognised philosophers, and (ii) that it should be borne out by our own experience as philosophers. Now it is easy to see that the particular views about reality, which the philosophers propound, cannot be essential to their function as philosophers, not only because these views are often utterly divergent from one another, but also because many philosophers, e.g. sceptics and agnostics, do not give us any such views at all. And if I examine myself as regards what I do as a philosopher, I find myself often examining my own experience and ideas as well as the ideas of other philosophers, which are offered for our acceptance, rather than trying to construct an acceptable view of the world, which appears altogether baffling to me. I am thus led to think that the characteristic philosophic act is critical reflection. I shall now try to elaborate this point.

It appears to me that philosophising is a self-conscious reflective activity. Philosophy is not meant to give us what may be called first-order knowledge. By first-order knowledge, I mean our relatively unreflective consciousness, or knowledge, of common sense objects like chairs and tables and such other objects, finer or grosser. I say ‘relatively unreflective’, because what absolutely unreflective consciousness amounts to we are unable to recall or realise at the present level of our intellectual development. Common sense and science (which is perhaps nothing more than systematised common sense) already involve some amount of reflection.

tion, but we are hardly aware of this reflection. Absolutely unreflective consciousness would represent some bare content, which would not be similar to, or different from any other, and would not be taken even as given. It is only as a result of some reflection that we can understand a content as given. When we so understand it, we have already committed ourselves, however justifiably, to a theory. However, our ordinary consciousness represents objects as given, and our self-conscious reflection must start from these. Common sense thus is the starting point of philosophy. I should admit that common sense already represents a kind of philosophy, but it is philosophy which we unreflectively inherit from society. If one is to be a philosopher of common sense, one must reflect on common sense and, having elicited the ideas and beliefs involved in it, try to find reasons in their support. If our reflection results in any kind of second-order knowledge, as it is supposed to do in such disciplines as logic, epistemology, etc., it is certainly not in the sense of extending the bounds of our first-order knowledge. Reflection will perhaps reveal some factors already involved in our first-order knowledge, and thus in a sense, deepen our former knowledge and further illumine the objects already known, and may, in an extreme case, even liquidate the object, hitherto believed to be known. What reflection will not do is to add another object to our knowledge, co-ordinate with the object already known. We know many men in our ordinary experience, and if by reflection we become aware of an essence like humanity, this will not surely add to the number of men we already know, but merely give us a better understanding of them.

The natural tendency of the mind is to go forward and outward. In reflection it turns backward and inward. Man is not naturally reflective. It is only when he meets with some serious obstruction that he is forced to pause and reflect. A man who is uniformly successful in life is not commonly given to much reflection and is apt to remain shallow and superficial. Some kind of painful experience, some failure or defeat, appears necessary to start a man on his reflective activity. Occasions are not lacking in life, even when it is most ordinary, to provide this painful start. Nobody has complete control over his desires and some desires of every man are bound to remain unfulfilled. Unfulfilled desire gives us a sense of contradiction in life which is painful to a sensitive mind. There are various sorts of maladjustment in our individual and national lives. Disease and death are found in every family. If we add to these the cases of unrequited love and un-



merited suffering, of false calumny and flagrant injustice as well as of insensate cruelty, we shall understand that the world is not certainly a place where thoughtless complacency is possible for a sensitive mind. If still we are not critical and reflective, it is not because there are no occasions for it, but because our mind is not sufficiently sensitive.

Reflection is initiated by a sense of confusion and lack of understanding, which it is the obvious aim of reflection to remove. In our present ambiguous position, reflection seems almost inevitable. We are in the world and are not of the world, being an uneasy compromise between spirit and matter. Although we are blessed with the light of knowledge, we suffer from deep-seated ignorance. We know so much but understand so little. But the sense of confusion and ignorance is superficial with some and deep with others. It is the latter who are led to deep thinking which is another name for philosophising.

In our description of philosophy as critical reflection, the word critical is very important. Reflection, which is philosophy, is not mere reflective or doubled consciousness of a content that is already known, (as when 'there is a table' is turned into 'I know that there is a table'), nor in it mere blind worrying about an unintelligible situation, but an alert and intelligent sifting and searching. By critical reflection, we mean reflection which enquires, examines and judges. This can be applied to almost any situation or department of experience, which is not absolutely clear or self-evident. To a superficial observer many things appear plain and clear which, to a penetrating eye, are full of difficulties. So if you are sensitive and inquisitive by nature and have time for thought, you will find food for your philosophic reflection almost at every step.

I have suggested that we do not begin with blank ignorance, but with a very imperfect understanding of things and events. In such understanding, we already make use of ideas and theories which in themselves are not very clear and often involve contradiction. This deficiency in our ideas and theories is made patent to us through critical reflection. If we study facts in their stark objectivity, abstracted from all subjective reference, we are likely to produce science and not philosophy. And really, we seriously reflect only on our *experience* of things and events, which have already engaged our volition and affection, and about which we feel some sort of concern. In our understanding, however imper-

fect, of such things, we are required to make use of some surmises as to what they portend or what we intend through them. It is clear that we are concerned here not merely with ideas and theories, but with ends and ideals also. Our ideas of so-called facts and ideals are always interlaid with surmises, and critical reflection brings to light not only the surmises imbedded in them, but also forces us to face the question of their validity.

We question not only the ideas which determine our knowledge of facts, but also the ideals or ends which guide our rational actions. Everywhere in philosophy, we are concerned with judgments of some kind, logical or ethical. We find these judgments already in the field, supplied mostly by common sense. Critical reflection makes them the objects of its query. We question them, because they are not absolutely clear or self-evident, i.e., they not only allow, but inevitably raise, in a sensitive and reflective mind, the questions of their 'how' and 'why'.

Critical reflection not only asks questions, but seeks also to answer them. Every question is a search for answer, and in so far as the search is successful, we get an answer which removes our original question. But the answer may, as, indeed, it often does, lead to further and more searching questions.

In our search for finally satisfactory answers, we have to delve further and further into the depths of our consciousness and raise all our mental or spiritual faculties to the highest pitch of their sensitiveness. We have however to take care that we do not lose the sense of seriousness and of the urgency of the facts and values which demand our recognition, and that we are not misled by sheer imagination into a cloudland of fancy.

The most obvious starting points for critical reflection, as we have suggested, are provided by the ordinary judgments of everyday life. We may not like to deviate much from the healthy common sense represented by these, but try to keep close to them even in our philosophical questioning. But, of course, we cannot demand beforehand that the result of our philosophical enquiry must conform to common sense. Philosophy at its minimum is questioning, and if we are not to question common sense, we cannot even begin to philosophise. But to question common sense is at least to accept the possibility of common sense being ultimately repudiated or superseded in some sense. But of course one must have some compelling reasons, or a superior kind of insight, to



deviate from a view of the world which is enshrined in our common sense beliefs and is accepted and acted on by the vast majority of mankind. However, it is also true that what answers well the broad questions of life at a superficial level will not properly answer the subtler and deeper questioning of a deep and penetrating mind. Those, who are constantly asking themselves now-a-days as to the precise meaning of this and that linguistic expression, are no doubt actuated by a genuinely philosophical motive but they would be imposing an undue limitation on their work, if they supposed that the only valid answers to their questions were those which could be formulated within the framework of common sense beliefs.

Just as philosophical questions can be raised on the level of common sense, so can they arise on other levels as well. Our common sense beliefs are different from scientific beliefs as well as from those of a religious man or a rigorous moralist. These different beliefs represent different kinds or levels of experience and they can all be subjected to philosophical questioning. That is, we may enquire into the ultimate grounds of these beliefs and also question their validity. In every case our philosophising will take its colour from the basic experience from which we start.

Whenever we question genuinely, we try to find an answer; but, of course, the satisfactory answer may not always be forthcoming. Many philosophers believe they have found such answers. The different philosophies, well known in the history of philosophy, the six traditional systems of our country, for instance, represent standing answers of great thinkers to the ever-recurring philosophical problems. I do not think that all these philosophies can be equally true in the same sense, but, perhaps, everyone of them is valid in some sense. It is quite possible that different philosophies represent reality from different points of view and are so far true. If a philosopher has genuinely and faithfully seen reality from a particular point of view, his philosophy is bound to stand, so long as there are other people who can attain to his point of view and see reality in a similar way.

It would be taking a very simple view of human intelligence to suppose that different philosophies flourish because of some fallacious kinds of reasoning and that if one could point out, and others could see, the inherent fallacies, there would be but one philosophy accepted by all. It would be as incredible as the idea that people are converted from one religious faith to another through the commission, or correction, of some logical fallacy.

Any logical argument, it appears, depends on some data, which are accepted at the start, and some principles of reasoning according to which the argument proceeds. The data and the principles are not ultimately amenable to any logical treatment. I do not however suppose that they are either blindly or arbitrarily chosen. I think they are as we see them, and we see them differently because of the difference in the character and constitution of our minds. If we do not like to suppose that we possess different types of mind, which determine our different metaphysics and logics, but prefer to think that we have the same kind of mind, then, for the explanation of our philosophical differences, we may suppose that reality is perceived at different levels in different philosophies.

Any particular metaphysics and corresponding logic hold good only at a particular level. We may genuinely pass from one philosophy to another by deepening our mind or consciousness (or, in the reverse way, by making it 'more superficial' which, by the way, often means clearer) or merely through a shift in our standpoint. We are never carried from one philosophy to another by strict logical argument, but the process is often facilitated by the judicious use of analogies and other persuasive and imaginative devices. It seems possible to entertain imaginatively different philosophies alternatively, but seriously and genuinely we can believe but one philosophy, corresponding to the authentic insight of our mind.

It would be invidious to grade the different systems of philosophy as higher and lower in some scale, because such grading would only betray subjective preference. I would rather think that the different systems are not definitely true or definitely false, but merely represent different views of reality from different standpoints, corresponding to the philosophers' insight.

Must a philosopher always come at the end to a final and positive view of reality? I have already indicated that there is no such necessity. It is true that a positive view of reality, when accompanied by a firm conviction in its truth, will normally end the mental disquiet, which is inseparable from serious philosophical thinking. In a sense, fortunate is the man who has found his philosophy. And there are many philosophers who appear to think that they have found the truth. The standing systems of philosophy of India are offered by their votaries as final truths about reality. I am however inclined to think that it is very difficult to arrive at a positive view of reality, which will do justice to all the facts of experience, and it is equally difficult to be sure



that the view is true, because we can never be sure that some aspects of reality, incompatible with our view, have not escaped our consideration.

Philosophy arises, I suggested, to clear up some confusion. But it is never all confusion even to start with. Some amount of clarity is already provided by our common sense beliefs, and when it is found to be not enough, we strive to gain further light through philosophical thinking. It seems we gain better and better light through a deepening of our consciousness of reality, through a better ordering of our ideas and beliefs. At any stage, the light gained may be formulated in a theory worthy of belief. But the light may never be quite enough and may never result in a comprehensive and final view of reality. It seems there will always be room for further thought and there can be no holiday from philosophical thinking.

But, whether through failure of nerve or an excess of inner illumination, a philosopher may come, at some stage, to believe that he has received the final and absolute revelation of reality. Nobody need say he is wrong. It seems quite possible to gain an insight into some universal essence of things, which will come to you with the force of an ultimate revelation. But whether it will actually stand or need any emendation or elaboration, can be decided only by further consideration. A philosopher should always be ready to examine and reconsider his position. No view can be so sacrosanct to a philosopher as to bar all further consideration. To be amenable to examination and re-examination is really to remain open to doubt. A touch of scepticism thus seems unavoidable in a philosopher at any stage. A philosopher certainly seeks an authentic insight into reality, but an insight which can be made articulate in his thought and can be understood and examined by other intelligent persons. He is not a saint or a mystic, who can be content with a firm faith or an inarticulate intuition, barring all further enquiry.

We may distinguish between what may be called soft philosophy and hard philosophy. The soft philosopher struggles to arrive at a sufficiently clear view of reality, and perhaps attains it, and then rests there comfortably for the rest of his life. The hard philosopher similarly struggles to arrive at a clear view of reality, but even when he attains it and believes it for a time, he never stops from his philosophical endeavour. He is ever ready and eager to examine and criticise all beliefs, including his own, and we cannot conceive of a situation in which there will be no



need for his further reflection. The philosopher may have faith, but not blind faith that will brook no questioning. His faith will be open-eyed, in the sense that he will knowingly hold it as faith and be ready to give it up, when confronted with contrary evidence of sufficient weight. Having witnessed the graves of his own beliefs and of the beliefs of other people, he will always be chary to grant any belief, however clear or dear, a certificate of finality.

The fact is that the situation (or the world), in which we find ourselves, is so infinitely complex and intricate as well as so vast and immense, that it is altogether improbable that human ingenuity will ever succeed in devising an absolutely clear and accurate view of it, which will do justice to its complexity and immensity and will show no defect and need no improvement. Thus it has come about that, for the philosopher, there is no view which is so clear that it needs no further clarification, no view which is so deep that it needs no further deepening. Happily or unhappily, the philosopher has ever to carry on the travail of critical reflection, full of doubt and full of hope. He prefers the wakefulness of doubting thought to the blind certainty of a deadening faith. It is thus only that he can keep alive the tongue of the divine fire which is burning in him.





# Morality and Science<sup>1</sup>

*Presidential Address*

## SECTION : ETHICS AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

*by*

S. G. HULYALKAR

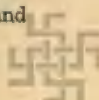
*Professor-in-Charge of Department of Philosophy,  
University of Poona*

We have been living in a world of bewildering potentialities—for good or for evil. There are means and resources made available by scientific inventions and discoveries with which we may build a more satisfying life and a better world. On the other hand, there is the possibility that we shall not be able to achieve the world of our dreams. And, this fear is becoming more and more threatening now than at any other time in the history of humanity. Today, we are on the brink of a dreadful catastrophe. Uneasiness, domestic and international strife, the atom-bomb, radioactive gases and bacteriological warfare may turn our modern scientific civilisation into a 'tale told by an idiot signifying nothing.' The men and women of today must choose the set of values they wish to support and the kind of world they wish to maintain.

### I

The life of man may be viewed in many different ways. He may be viewed as one species of mammal and considered in a purely biological light. In this respect, his success has been overwhelming. He can live in all climates and in any part of the world where there is water. He owes his success to certain things which distinguish him from other animals: speech, fire, agriculture, writing, implements, tools and large-scale co-operation. It is only in the matter of co-operation that he fails of complete success.

1. In this paper, the word morality is used in the sense of ethics though, generally, it refers to conduct itself. Thus morality and ethics are synonymous. Also, the word science is used in a narrower sense to mean physical sciences (as opposed to social and moral)—like Physics, Chemistry, etc., and also in the sense of scientific technology.



For, a man, like other animals, is created with impulses and passions which, on the whole have showed only survival value, while man was emerging. But his intelligence has shown him that if certain of his passions were given less scope and others more, his desires could be more satisfied, and his happiness more complete. Ethics and moral codes are necessary to man because of the persistent conflict between intelligence and impulse.

Man is more complex in his impulses and desires than any other animal, and from this complexity his difficulties spring. "He is neither completely gregarious like ants and bees, nor completely solitary, like lions and tigers". He is a semi-gregarious animal. Some of his impulses and desires are social, some are solitary. Thus, there is a constant see-saw between these two aspects of human nature. As we are not completely social, we feel the need of ethics to suggest purposes, and of moral codes to inculcate rules of action. However, ants and bees have no such need. They behave mostly as the interests of their community dictate. It is equally true that the solitary part of human nature is not to be valued less than the social part. For, the mystic, the artist, the poet, and the scientific discoverer are in their inmost being solitary. "What they do may be useful to others, and its usefulness may be an encouragement to them, but, in the moments when they are most alive and most completely fulfilling what they feel to be their function, they are not thinking of the rest of mankind but are pursuing a vision".<sup>2</sup> We must, therefore, admit two distinct elements in human excellence, one social, the other solitary. The morality which takes account only of the one, or only of the other, will be incomplete and unsatisfactory.

The history of morality is one of gradual advance. Among all groups of people, we find problems of conduct, and everywhere human life is in some sense, organised and directed. With the growth of society, regulations expressed themselves outwardly in law and inwardly in conscience. As conflicts arose, men searched for standards of judgment, and affective criticism was born. Morality appears to have taken the form of such a redirection of impulses as would make for the development of the individual and the preservation and welfare of the group. Moral standards depend on man's knowledge and intellectual and cultural development. As men become increasingly liberated from blind custom, they tend to direct conduct more and more on the basis of

2. B. Russell: *'Human Society in Ethics and Politics.'* Intro. p. 17.





a distinct philosophy of life. This shows how man's nature and culture meet in morality.<sup>3</sup>

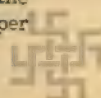
Mental and social conditions are among the most important factors in determining human behaviour. The traditional morality did not recognise these conditions, and even, if it did, at any rate it did not take them seriously. As a result of recent research along these lines, men are coming to realise that the individual does not grow in a social vacuum and that character is a matter of growth and social relationship. Today, the moral philosopher, the sociologist, and the psychologist must work in close co-operation. Conditions leading to misconduct need to be removed so far as possible, and the natural impulses of man need to be so directed that a well-integrated character results. Positive instruction regarding the attainment of the good life is of greater value than negative instruction or warning to avoid evil. The emphasis is thus shifted from "thou shalt not" to some thing positive that would lead men to a better life through persuasion, suggestion and a knowledge of the conditions making for a more satisfactory life. And men are seeking for moral standards which rest upon principles and values which will make life creative and meaningful. The test of such principles will be their adaptation to human needs.<sup>4</sup>

## II

The above discussion leads one to conclude that a man cannot lead his moral life unless his primary needs concerned with survival, such as food, water, shelter, clothing and reproduction are satisfied. Further, he cannot also lead his life in wilderness. He needs a certain society, a social order that takes into account rights, duties and obligations and creates sanctions for good and bad conduct. Thus "the beast and the spirit in man" must both be recognised and reconciled. The satisfaction of these needs gives meaning and value to the moral life of man, which is enriched and perfected by the addition of spiritual values. This alone ensures a man a place of special privilege and dignity in this Universe.

3. R. M. Marett: *'Man in the Making'*, Chap. X p. 108.

4. R. W. Sockman: "The test of every moral principle is its adaptation to the actual needs of life as seen over a period sufficiently long to sift the transient from the permanent." *The Morals of Tomorrow*, p. 228, Harper Brothers, New York, 1931.



Science as a dominant factor in determining the place of man and also in conditioning his life, has existed only for about three hundred years. As a source of economic technique, it has a history as short as hundred and fifty years. During that brief period, it has proved itself to be a very powerful force in shaping the destinies of man.<sup>5</sup> The development of the scientific ideas during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has produced far reaching changes even in man's day-to-day life. Right from the beginning, science has always had two functions: one to enable us to *know* things and the other to enable us to *do* things.<sup>6</sup> It is the second of these functions which has become of vital importance in modern times. The earliest techniques to become significant were those derived from Physics and Chemistry and as a result, the discovery of gun-powder made for the supremacy of the state as the major organ of the organised life of society. Similarly, the mariner's Compass revolutionised man's conception of the world and made travel and enterprise possible on any part of the globe. The development of steam and electric power has resulted in industrial revolution and its most distinctive achievements are to be seen in the field of transport—railways and steamers. The next stage in the development of scientific technique is connected with electricity and oil and the internal-combustion engine. Long before the use of electricity as power, it was used in the telegraph and later on, in broad-casting. The recent achievement is the development of flying. Aeroplanes have conquered successfully the limitations of space. All these scientific discoveries and the achievements of scientific technology have made the material conditions of human life more comfortable and enjoyable. It may also be noted that the impact of science on society can abolish poverty; it can make unnecessary excessive hours of work, it can raise the standards of life. It can result in the diminution of lawlessness and can also lead to a vast increase in education and in opportunities. No doubt, life has thus become more easy, if not necessarily rosy. In recent years, the technical application of physical knowledge—the utilisation of atomic energy has caused a rapid expansion in every aspect of life.<sup>7</sup>

5. B. Russell: A brief survey in this section is taken from "*The Impact of Science on Society*", Chapt. II, p. 49-82.

6. B. Russell: '*The Impact of Science on Society*', p. 49.

7. "*Atomic Power for Peace*", published by U.S.I.S. "The Veil of the unknown is being lifted to help our mankind. In the fields of agriculture, medicine, industry and power production, atomic scientists are seeking out the countless ways in which the atom's potential can be made to work for



In short, the scientific technology has created a new hope, a new sense of value in human life.

### III

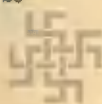
The explosion of the atom-bomb at Hiroshima in 1945, in its dramatic, dreadful and tragic impressiveness, awoke mankind to a vivid realisation of the life-and-death importance of science and its application in human affairs. As an application of modern physics, it exemplified the astonishing advance of scientific discovery and organised collaboration. It promised a great step forward in the release and control of the forces of Nature. It also gives the problem of War and Peace a new urgency. "The danger is that we have learned to split the atom before we have learned to unite mankind." The horrors and dread of war in this atomic age are too great; for it would result in the total extinction of our civilisation, exhaustion of natural resources, and universal death. These dangers, now so widely recognised and feared, raise a fundamental question of the good of science.<sup>8</sup> In these new developments, science comes into direct conflict with morality;<sup>9</sup> for even the fundamental right to live, is denied to all mankind. This is the irony of science, whether science is a blessing or curse to humanity is yet to be seen.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the opinion widely prevailed that in order to be beneficent and true to itself, science needed only to be freed from authority and obscurantism.

the benefit of man and free him from his country-old subservience to nature." —Also refer to—*The Atomic Crusade and its Social Implications* by Arthur H. Compton, Section 8, p. 420, from '*Roots of Political Behaviour*' by Richard Carlton Snyder and H. Hubert Wilson—American Book Company.

8. In July, 1955, a statement was made by Albert Einstein, Percy W. Bridgman, Leopold Infeld, Bertrand Russell and several other world renowned scientists and humanists, in which they posed the problem facing humanity. "Here then is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful and inescapable:—shall we put an end to human race or shall mankind renounce war? People will not face this alternative because it is so difficult to abolish war..." There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge and wisdom,... Shall we instead choose death because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal as human beings, to human beings; remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death."

9. Morality also is a science in the sense of "to know what matters"—whereas Physics or Chemistry is a science in the sense of "to know what exists". So, when the conflict arises between the two sciences, it is because of their purpose or aim, or the value pursued by them.



During the next century, the prestige of science continued to increase, as seen before, through its spectacular discoveries, through the multiplication of its applications and through its alliance with an industrialised economy. Even when science was making continual progress, its opponents accused it of stressing 'material' to the exclusion of 'spiritual' values in human life. In its application to man, it appeared to be self-defeating. It described man in machanical terms that made him incapable either of pursuing science or profiting by it. However, during the first world war and what followed later, the prestige of science was still high. For the social tensions, and conflicts of those years were in large part attributed to the technological developments of industry. War itself had become increasingly technological. The world awoke from the Second World War as "from a terrifying and unforgettable nightmare in which the war-mongers represented the awful partnership between the most advanced developments of science and lowest forces of beastiality." "The scientific laboratory, once considered as a well-spring of life, took on the aspect of a witch's cauldron where scientists brewed the elixir of death."<sup>10</sup> This is a situation which calls for a fundamental examination of the role of science in human life.

#### IV

Is science intrinsically beneficent or harmful?, or is science itself merely an instrument which may be put to good or bad uses? Is the scientist *qua* scientist a benefactor of mankind, or does he become such only by an accident, or by forces independent of his own scientific motivation? If science has such evil possibilities, that it must be controlled, how shall it be controlled and by what principles?<sup>11</sup> Unless answers to these questions can be found, man may seem to be faced with the necessity of restricting or abandoning altogether one of his greatest powers for good, lest through its abuse it became a fatal instrument of evil.

The values of science arise from its relations direct or indirect, to interest.<sup>12</sup> Science, like all knowledge, has its intrinsic values: in other words, there is an interest in science for its own sake, the cognitive interest itself. The extrinsic, or utilitarian values of science are those which are imparted to objects by the

10. R. B. Perry: *Realms of Value*, p. 297, Harvard University Press, 1954.

11. Most of the views expressed in this section of the paper are gratefully taken from *Ibid.* Chapt. XVII, pp. 314-318.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

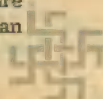




dependent scientific interest. It is extrinsically valuable because of the many interests which the cognitive interest affects. There is usually an interplay between the independent and dependent scientific interests. The former consists in a progressive increase of truth, proof and certainty, and a rejection of past cognitions as erroneous, dogmatic and uncertain. Present doubts regarding the beneficence of science do not arise from its uselessness, but from its excessive and indiscriminate usefulness. "The 'Ivory Tower' scientist is at worst a harmless eccentric who has to be maintained at the expense of society; the danger arises from the scientist who descends to the plane of action and places himself at the disposal of all and sundry." In this atomic age it has given too much power in the hands of statesmen and politicians. Science and technology are, in themselves, indifferent to the uses which they serve. They lend themselves with equal readiness to any practical application. Hence the need arises for their moral and social control.<sup>13</sup>

The most important external judgment upon science is the moral judgment—most important because the social order is now at stake. While science *qua* science is not obliged to consider its moral relations, society may well consider them, and ask, how far science, being what it is, tends to serve or thwart the moral purpose. Pure science is universal in its character. If it is opposed to morality, it is not because of its subject matter but because of its pre-occupation. The scientific pursuit has despite its aspect of universality, also its aspect of narrowness. The scientist tends to dissociate himself from all the organised enterprise devoted to the general good. The cult of science also works against morality, through its very dispassionateness. The purpose of science is defeated only when it is subjected to social, political, economic, religious or other external pressures. So, we find today, the greatest of the evils resulting from the intrusion of scientific technique. The exhaustion of natural resources, the destruction of individual initiative by governments, control of men's minds by central organs of education, and propaganda are some of the major evils which appear to be on the increase as a result of the impact of science

13. In its campaign against Nuclear Test explosions, the Government of India, through its Defence Science Organisation has published a book entitled *Nuclear Explosions and their effects* highlighting the irretrievably harmful effects of these explosions on mankind's genetic heritage. Efforts are thus being made to create world opinion to ban such tests on humanitarian ground.



on society. Modern science and technique as Russell says: "have enhanced the powers of rulers and have made it possible as never before, to create whole societies on a plan conceived in some man's mind. This possibility has led to an intoxication with love of system and in this intoxication, the elementary claims of the individual are forgotten".<sup>14</sup> To find a way of doing justice to these claims is one of the major problems of our time.

It has been argued by some that the cure for the defects of scientific technology is more science—not more science indiscriminately, but the extension of science into the domain of human relations and institutions. Despite the notable developments of psychology and social sciences in recent times, the evils of the day are still attributed by many to a time lag of the control of human forces behind the control of the forces of physical nature. "The cure for human ills lies in the development of a '*technology of human nature*' which is distinct from the development of physical technology".<sup>15</sup>

The international control of scientific technology is morally justified only on the assumption that the international institutions in which this control is vested are themselves dedicated to the end of the just provision for all human interests—personal, national, and sectional. In short, if the control of science is to be normally beneficent, the *moral will* must control its controls.

The difference between the control of pure science and the control of technology is recognised in contemporary discussions of atomic energy. Pure nuclear physics must not be so controlled as to deprive research of its essential freedom to follow the evidence and expand the limits of enquiry; and so controlled as to deprive a man of its good applications as well as its bad. It *need* not be strictly controlled because it does not destroy cities until it has been converted into weapons. So, society controls or aims to control in behalf of the good of mankind at large, only those technologies that are required for the manufacture of fire-arms, noxious gases, toxic-drugs, and other harmful and destructive weapons.

The moral control of science is peculiarly bound to the principle of liberality. The scientist must be free to follow the evidence wherever it leads him. He must be free to communicate his results to other scientists and thus to obtain their confirmation and

14. *Human Society in Ethics and Politics*, Intro., p. 20.

15. R. B. Perry, *Realms of Value*, p. 319.



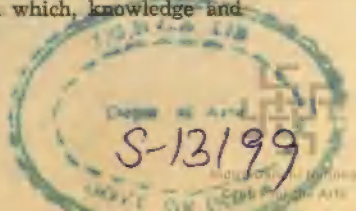


their collaboration. And, if his results are to be available for good uses, they must be deposited in a public fund to the credit of all mankind. The moral control of science must look ultimately to the science of morals. But even a true science of morals affords no guarantee of moral beneficence. The knowledge of good and evil does not of itself make men good. Men must acquire a will inclined to the good, the right, the dutiful and opposed to the evil, the wrong and the undutiful. The striving towards the moral ideals is not a universal human pre-disposition; it has to be implanted, and continuously nourished. In that nourishment, liberal and humane education plays a very important role. It is not a branch of education but a set of values that should pervade all education and to an increasing extent on its higher levels. Everything else, is beside the point, unless men's dispositions are altered; unless their habits of thought, their outlook, their emotional attitudes are attuned to the moral and cultural unity of mankind. If this education is imparted in its right spirit, a "global-mindedness" would be its chief achievement. This seems to have been the reason which moved the U.N. in its noble purpose of creating the UNESCO.<sup>16</sup>

## V

As seen already, the imperative need of our time is the social and the moral control of science and scientific technology. The institution to which this work is to be assigned must be essentially a moral institution. And this moral institution by its very purpose, cannot belong to any particular nation or the state. It must be an organisation which belongs to all nations and all people. This necessarily leads us to the possibility of building an actual world government on a federal basis. Such a government must be sufficiently world-wide to deal with the world economy and social problems which threaten to endanger the peace of the world. Next, we need sufficient armed strength for the World Federation to make aggression by any nation or small group of nations, seem futile. A detailed discussion of the organisations or machinery for the promotion of peace is not possible here. We should remem-

16. When the United States accepted membership of United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, President Truman made the following statement:—"UNESCO will summon to service in the cause of peace, the forces of education, science, learning creative arts, and the agencies of film, the radio and the printed word through which, knowledge and ideas are diffused among mankind."

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ber, too, that while organisation is important, the spirit, the attitude and the living faith which men hold are of greater importance. While the accident of birth makes a man a member of a nation, it also makes him a member of humanity. He can be loyal to mankind without being disloyal to his own state and his own kindred. When man sees that the rights of other persons and of other groups, are as sacred as his own, he is approaching moral maturity.

It has been suggested in the foregoing discussion that control of science should be handed over to some moral institution to which some, if not all nations in the world show at least some kind of allegiance. The only body which can take such a responsibility is the U.N. which is a truly democratic organisation. Democracy, like the several moral institutions, of which it is composed is in principle, universal. Even the very coming into existence of U.N. has shown that the overall organisation of such a body should be democratic. The preamble of its Charter is a formulation of democratic principles, and the Charter, as a whole, is a democratic constitution. After the last world war, and in view of the growing interdependence of all human societies resulting from an advance in technology, men were faced with two alternatives: a world-wide imperialism or a world-wide democracy. Men agreed to choose the latter and to reject the former. The success and the failure of the U.N. alike testify to its democratic intent.

Most of the nations have agreed to settle their differences on all issues by peaceful negotiations and not by war.<sup>17</sup> War has not succeeded so far to solve the problems of nations. It is the moral maturity of the individuals of nations who have power, position and vision that alone can solve the ever increasing and complicated problems of the world. It is generally argued that international morality in such matters is not yet fully developed and hence it does not offer any solution to such problems. However, it is wrong to make a distinction between individual morality and international morality even on moral grounds. It seems that the problems of international morality arise and seem almost insoluble, because individual moral life is itself not pro-

17. Bertrand Russell challenges the Great Powers and warns them to renounce war or threat of war and to settle issues by negotiations and compromise or face destruction. "Challenge to Great Powers"—Article, *Times of India*, February 5, 1956.

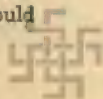


perly understood or dealt with and we have not really succeeded in establishing the true moral point of view even in the individual. Whatever be our professions and aspirations, conflict and narrowness are not overcome even in individual life; naturally in the more complex situations of wider social group, they become more insistent, so much so, that there is almost an inclination to justify them in that sphere. On the other hand, an abstract worship of the moral ideal by ignoring the material which often characterises the precept, if not practice, of the individual life, makes us unduly critical of group behaviour and we censure necessary courses of social action in an unrealistic fashion. In order to be able to have a clear idea of human relations and international obligations, we need a clearer idea of the basic nature of the moral task.<sup>18</sup> Morality is essentially and closely related to the rest of life, particularly, material and social. It is not identical with it and yet apart from it, has no meaning and value. If this fact is recognised, we shall not be impressed as at present, by the contrast between human behaviour in smaller and larger groups but see how they are necessarily related to each other. In this respect, great responsibility lies on the Western Democracies and the U.S.S.R.—member nations of the U.N. to give a correct lead in good time, to the world and Humanity. The international morality is, in essence, a code of behaviour between the various nations of the world. In the absence of any agreed code of conduct, the *Panchsheel* offers a guidance in this behalf and it has been welcomed, in the present circumstances, by most of the nations. In this respect, the contribution made by our Prime Minister Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru, is outstanding. If not everywhere, at least, in some troubled spots of the world, that mission of peace and goodwill has borne fruits. If a proper understanding of all human problems is developed, even the nations of the world can approach moral maturity. Hope for a better world and for lasting peace are held out by U.N. in developing that proper spirit which truly explains the real essence of man as MAN.

## VI

The evil of war does not consist merely in the injury inflicted on the external enemy. It is an internal evil. Of all the

18. The basic document on the problem of Human Relations and International Obligations—a Survey of it was submitted by the UNESCO to the Indian Philosophical Congress during its 29th Session, December 1954. Efforts in that direction are already in progress. May we hope that they would succeed!



collective passions which inhibit reflection and blind men to their several interests, the fever of war is the most terrible. For, the manifold economic and cultural values of individuals and groups, it may substitute the unsubstantial and transitory value of 'glory', and even this is enjoyed by a small fraction of those who pay the cost. "War illustrates the tragic irony that morality within limits may serve as a means to immorality beyond". Because of its intensification and the terrible results that follow, war forces one to avoid rather than to wage it. Therefore, to threaten a war in order to prevent war, or making a war to end war, is psychologically treacherous. War is, as seen from history, the old game of power politics. The drives for power and strategic position, for prestige, for sources of raw materials and for markets, have been and are to-day, major causes of war.<sup>19</sup> The chief cause of recent wars is the fact that as individuals and as nations we have neglected the fundamental moral basis of society, that is, *the right to live*.

The problem of world unity and mutual understanding is fundamentally a moral problem and requires moral education in order that men may be made to realise the destructiveness of conflict and the opportunity of peaceful co-operation and co-existence on a world-wide scale. All men now agree that the only alternative to peaceful co-existence is war with all its devastating consequences.<sup>20</sup> War is, on the whole, most unreasonable. The difficult thing is not to explain the occurrence of war but to justify it. It is a direct violation of the moral principle of harmony—in short, "war is moral evil, and peace is moral good." The state of war is the essence of moral evil; the first maxim of morality is "seek peace"; the moral virtues are the dispositions or modes of behaviour which seek peace.

The moral ideal makes all men of goodwill joint participants in a common struggle, mourning common defects and celebrating common victory. Global-mindedness might help to teach men to sympathise with others and to understand their problems in a most human way. It would also help to rehabilitate the Socratic wisdom and faith in the goodness in men.

19. Harold H. Titus says, "Among the paths to war: isolationism unconditional neutrality, bigoted nationalism, competitive armament races, economic imperialism and power politics, monopolistic trade practices and depressions." *Ethics for Today*, p. 451.

20. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan—'Conflict or Co-existence'—*Indo-Asian Culture* Vol. IV, No. 2, Oct, 1955.



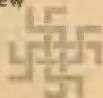


Our problems are more discouraging because they exist in spite of military victories, increased industrial capacity, technological 'know-how', and more education and science, than we have ever had before. Are our troubles due in part to the fact that we have permitted our ideals and our actions to become divorced and to move in different directions? Civilisation is, in large part, a set of ideas, ideals and loyalties. When men forget or neglect their ideals and seek other and less worthy ends, civilisation tends to decline. Our trouble is due to our neglect of moral ideals and a lack of spiritual insight, and not to a lack of science, of technical education or of material equipment. If scientific knowledge is not to lead to our destruction but to serve mankind, we need a social purpose involving mature conceptions of right and wrong. We need to recover the moral insight of our cultural and spiritual heritage and to bring them into harmony with our modern personal and social relationship.

If aids to such a noble life are all within us, efforts should be made to discover the basis for a healthy, happy and satisfying life. We want life, not death; happiness, not pain. We want to grow and live full and abundant lives. Morality is the *attempt* to discover and to live a good life. Thus, *unless* science is *humanised* and handled with tact and spiritual insight, as has been repeatedly told by Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru, the result will be the destruction of all that is good and great.<sup>21</sup> It will lead to the uprooting of humanity itself and frustrate the very purpose of Creation. "Science has given a distinctive cast and colour to the modern consciousness. It has added to the scope and stature of the human mind, (to quote Dr. Radhakrishnan) but science is not all". If man is to lead a happy life on earth, the advance of science which has helped to raise the level of human welfare, must be *tempered with morality*.<sup>22</sup>

21. Shri J. Nehru so prophetically put in '*The Discovery of India*'. "The very progress of science unconnected with and isolated from moral discipline and ethical considerations, will lead to the concentration of power and the terrible instruments of destruction which it has made, in the hands of evil and selfish men, seeking the domination of others—and thus, to the destruction of its own great achievements."

22. George Sarton: "The History of Science is important but scientific education must be humanised in proportion to the withdrawal of the old humanities—the humanities without scientific education are incomplete; on the other hand, he says to scientists, "without history without philosophy, without arts and letters, without a living religion, we would be going to the abyss." *History of Science and New Humanism*. George Braziller, Inc., New York, 1956.



# Existentialism : A Historical Assessment

*Presidential Address*

## SECTION : HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

by

A. K. SARKAR

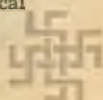
*University of Ceylon, Peradeniya*

I have chosen to discuss Existentialist philosophy in its historical setting and prospect as a theme for the Presidential Address of the History of Philosophy Section of the Indian Philosophical Congress, this year, for it provides a novel clue to an understanding of the deeper currents of the history of philosophy, west and east.

The western philosophical reflection upto Hegel (1770-1831), has a continuous conceptual-empirical tradition; the empirical trend is usually reactionary following the conceptual. The reactionary trends after Hegel, whether idealistic, pragmatistic, phenomenological, positivistic, evolutionistic or realistic, expressed by such able thinkers as Bradley (1846-1924), Peirce (1839-1914), Husserl (1859-1938), Ayer (1910), Bergson (1859-1941), or Alexander (1859-1938), bring about a total collapse of the past conceptual-empirical tradition.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the aforesaid and other post-Hegelian reactionary trends,<sup>2</sup> existentialism does not break itself away from the past traditional philosophy, for it keeps alive the age-old distinction between *essence* and *existence*. According to existentialism, the past philosophy with its stress on essence or pure thought belongs to the first order of the historical process, while

1. Thilly: *A History of Philosophy*, revised by Wood (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1952) Vide chiefly chs. XVI, XVII, XIX & XX.

2. There is no reference to Whitehead's philosophy in this paper as Whitehead's post-Hegelian realistic trend is not reactionary in any specific sense; he only prepares the ground for various approaches to a comprehensive realistic experience, utilising the past and present philosophic-scientific principles. For writer's views about Whitehead's philosophy vide his *An Outline of Whitehead's Philosophy* (Arthur H. Stockwell Ltd., 1940) and his papers under different captions in the Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress (1953-1955).





its own trend belongs to the second phase, stressing vital human existences by psychological attitudes. It is a depth philosophy interpreting transcendent and prospective psychological experience continuously negating conceptual-empirical-phenomenological dispositions. It is not a rootless philosophy, its vibrations can be felt as far back as Augustine (353-430), Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) and Socrates (469-399 B.C.).<sup>3</sup> In Leibniz (1646-1716) one finds a clear distinction between essence and existence in his two philosophic principles of *identity* and *sufficient reason*, but for philosophic reasons he keeps them in equilibrium.<sup>4</sup> The distinction between essence and existence becomes pronounced in Kierkegaard (1813-1855). From Kierkegaard existentialism can claim a full one-hundred-year-old tradition. Therefore, it is the oldest of the contemporary trends and at the same time it reflects the most dominant psychological state of the post-war conditions. Blackham rightly observes that, 'it is a contemporary renewal of one of the necessary phases of human experience in a conflict of ideals which history has not yet resolved.'<sup>5</sup> According to Ruggiero, existentialism in its different forms, is a *lively appeal against the conceptual abstractions of idealism* and it brings a *healthy ferment* into philosophical thought by bringing in the problem of human existence.<sup>6</sup>

Existentialism affirms that every truth and every action imply both an environment and a subjectivity.<sup>7</sup> It interprets emergent human subjectivity or consciousness from a concrete relational socio-cultural background without trying to speculate upon it from an abstract subjective or objective basis giving prominence to the eye and interpreting everything as *presented*.<sup>8</sup> It presents con-

3. Wahl: *A Short History of Existentialism* (Translated from the French by Williams and Maron, Philosophical Library, 1949) pp. 8-9. Also Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*. Translation & Introduction by Mairet (Methuen & Co. Ltd., reprinted 1952) p. 5.

4. Ruggiero: *Existentialism*, Edited and introduced by Heppenstall (Secker & Warburg, 1946) p. 45. Also Harper: *Existentialism* (Harvard University Press, 1949), preface, p. vii.

5. *Six Existentialist Thinkers* (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1925) preface, p. vi. Also Troisfontaines: *Existentialism and Christian Thought*, Introduction by Kerr (Adam & Charles Black, 1949), p. 5.

6. *Existentialism*, p. 44.

7. Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 24.

8. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread—A study of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre*, (Darwen Finlayson Ltd., 1955) p. 69 'Above all, Idealism is a visual philosophy; it is concerned only with the world that I clearly perceive. It knows nothing of that other side of reality...'



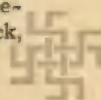
sciousness as a deep psychological attitude; it is not a conceptual-empirical-phenomenological point-of-view nor a passing psychological mood.<sup>9</sup> Existentialism tends to go beyond the realm of the *given* though not denying it for any abstract reason. In its primary phase existentialism suggests a *despair* of reason through its emergent consciousness, and this serves as a precondition for the negation of *essence* or *permanence* associated with the traditional notion of consciousness. In its posterior phase it considers consciousness as a *concrecence* or a focal point with a basic instability and restlessness making itself a possibility for action or decision in relation to a changing socio-cultural environment. As a possibility it cancels its basic apparent theoretic experience of the immediate situation (the realm of the given) and projects itself to a posterior psychological situation by an ever-emergent *will*<sup>10</sup> that has totally freed itself from the serfdom of the instincts and from the norms and values of reason exhibited in the various periods of history of philosophy for more than two thousand five hundred years of the great tradition that begins with Thales (624-554 B.C.). Existentialism is a psychological attitude with a quest of values beyond the past cultural process.

In this process of continuous de-conceptualisation (or separation from conceptual-empirical proneness) and leap into concrete decision (or projection) to decipher a socio-cultural field, the emergent psychological consciousness may appear as an ugly duckling but it is soon to come up as a protean swan exhibiting its ever-fresh subjectivity with firm attitude by a return to its own freedom from complex environmental processes or pressures to extract the significance of its own being.<sup>11</sup> It extricates itself from the defects

9. Das: *Is Existentialism Philosophy?* (*Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress*, 1951) p. 68 '...existentialism, in general, may be described as a revolt of life against thought, of passion and feeling against reflective contemplation.'

10. According to Ussher (*Journey Through Dread*), an existentialist 'finds himself thrown into an unfriendly world and confronted with a Demon, his naked will..' (p. 15). It is interesting to observe that Ussher gets 'a hint of an older, perhaps more gracious philosophy—the "Wandering in the Great Void" of the Buddhist..' and confidently suggests that the "Existential Will", when it learns to know itself and trust itself, may make men well adjusted, and therefore free..' p. 9. Also Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, p. 163. 'It is a hard doctrine, a challenge to everybody and everything, a call to heroism.'

11. Troisfontaines: *Existentialism and Christian Thought*, p. 25. Heine-mann: *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament* (Adam & Charles Black,





of the traditional bourgeois temperament and mode. In its progress it faces other concrete trends as Marxism or Freudianism but saves itself from falling a prey to either materialism or psychologism, its aim being always to abandon the realm of the given, outer or inner.<sup>12</sup>

Existentialism does not boast of a clear-cut system or philosophy in any traditional sense;<sup>13</sup> it sets up a series of psychological stands with depth, persistence and comprehensiveness but does not prescribe a code of analysis. It travels light, picks up categories and drops them whenever necessary not failing to give expression to a stable attitude in terms of the needs and demands of the situation.<sup>14</sup> It revolts against all dogmatic propensities and over-systematization of experience and lies under a double negation—the no-more of the gods that have fled and the not-yet of the god that is coming<sup>15</sup>—but not ceasing to be meaningful and truly philosophic. Existentialism is a combined philosophic and psychological attitude choosing life and revolt rather than doctrine or grace.<sup>16</sup>

Second Edition, 1953) p. 80. Radhakrishnan (Presidential Address: The Indian Philosophical Congress, 1950, Silver Jubilee Commemoration Vol. II, p. 17) interprets existentialism as expressing a deep moral and intellectual need for *Being* or *Absolute* in this present age of crisis: he inclines more to Kierkegaard than to Heidegger for the development of existentialist thought. This paper lays more stress on Heidegger's as a later and efficient phase of existentialist philosophy, from a historical standpoint.

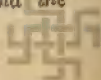
12. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, '...with Existentialism—at least in its later phases—we are in the climate of Einstein, Picasso and Freud.' p. 10; also p. 14. *Ibid.*, 'This is pragmatism and materialism—but with a difference, for Self is again the centre,' p. 70, also p. 93.

13. Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, pp. 151-3, 160-3, Wahl: *A Short History of Existentialism*, '...I (Kierkegaard) refuse to be a paragraph in a system', p. 4. '...there are views of reality which cannot be completely reduced to scientific formulas,' p. 32. '...A new mode of philosophising,' p. 34.

14. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, pp. 9, 14, 20. Also Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, p. 21.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-4. Mahadevan: Presidential Address, *Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress, 1955*, p. 15. Mahadevan's criticism of existentialism is from a Vedāntic standpoint, which can be accepted as an alternative stand, but existentialism in its historical emergence and development has its speciality and efficiency; it is not a mere post-phenomenological mood after Husserl.

16. Troisfontaines: *Existentialism and Christian Thought*, p. 24. This statement has to be understood in connection with Camus another outstanding French existentialist like Sartre. Also Heinemann: *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, p. 73.



Its very choice of apparent pessimism is its redeeming feature.<sup>17</sup> It feels that time has changed and with it human mentality. To fit into changing circumstances man has to decide every moment and constantly *separate* himself from the dream-life of conceptualism or exalted fantasy.<sup>18</sup> Philosophic reflection, as a step to decision in relation to concrete situation, amounts to a kind of pragmatism, but existentialist's novel psychological orientation for continuous alertness and activity has nothing to do with pragmatism and its shaping process from Peirce to Lewis.<sup>19</sup> It encounters almost all contemporary realistic, linguistic and idealistic currents beyond Husserlian phenomenism but skilfully separates itself from all such trends.

This paper considers existentialist philosophy in its two well-marked post-Hegelian and post-Husserlian phases, choosing for its study only such thinkers as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche (1844-1900), Jaspers (1883), Marcel (1889), Heidegger (1889) and Sartre (1905), excluding others equally great as Russian Berdyaev (1875-1948) and American Niebuhr.<sup>20</sup> Existentialism is not merely one of the contemporary reactionary stands; if sympathetically viewed, it may be shown that it has a lasting character which goes deep

17. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, 'That pessimism is not of the passive Schopenhauerian kind, but is rather a bracing sense of the menace and challenge of existence,' p. 9, 'Existentialism in fact is not uncontaminated by the Idealism...against which it arose as a protest. As in Idealism the Self or Subject really exists in a Void, a masquerade of appearances, so in Existentialism the Void...has, so to say, been made flesh and became the Self. Both the two philosophies, apparently opposite, can easily be expanded into complete nihilism.' In this paper the notion of the void has been extended from Nietzsche to Sartre, and related in an aspect to the void of the Buddhist schools in a broad cultural sense.

18. Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, pp. 21, 152-6.

19. Wood: *Recent Epistemological Schools in A History of Philosophical Systems*, Ed. by Fern (Rider & Co. 1950). Wood's development of contemporary pragmatism in a post-Husserlian direction has a special significance for this paper, for, existentialist thought also, in an aspect, is post-Husserlian.

20. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, p. 10. Heinemann: *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament* p. 2, for Berdyaev, Ch. IX. Wahl: *A History of Existentialism*, p. 1, for a general reference to contemporary existentialists. For a short review of Berdyaev's existentialist standpoint vide Clarke: *Introduction to Berdyaev* (Geoffrey Bles, 1950). For Niebuhr's final existentialist standpoint, vide his *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, in 2 vols. (Nisbet & Co., Ltd., reprinted, 1946 and 1948).





into the currents of philosophic reflections in general<sup>21</sup> crossing its own cultural milieu.

Kierkegaard, the father of existentialist thought, though nurtured in the Hegelian tradition, deviates from Hegelianism.<sup>22</sup> Being conscious of a deep psychological condition, Kierkegaard despairs reason and entertains some consequent psychological experiences as anxiety, anguish and even sickness unto death till concrete decision is made.<sup>23</sup> Kierkegaard's despair is not an intellectual stand as Pyrrho's (365-270 B.C.) suspension of judgment or Descartes' (1596-1650) philosophic doubt, nor his psychological experiences momentary moods. Life-process, to Kierkegaard, is not within the boundaries of one's intellectual castle—a continuous self-confinement, a romantic aestheticism—but is a concrete facing of life with ever-fresh decisions according to situation—a *repetition*, or cancellation of one's intellectual proneness, a leap into perilous ocean of activity in interpersonal situation.<sup>24</sup> Kierkegaard's is a search for a new category or mode of activity which is ethical or social. According to Ussher and Collins,<sup>25</sup> Kierkegaard lived most-

21. Das: (Is Existentialism Philosophy? *Proceedings, Indian Philosophical Congress*, 1951, p. 72) defends existentialism even though 'it does not evidence logical thought throughout its whole procedure...' Heinemann (*Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, p. 4.) supports existentialism from Ayer's criticism of it as dead and nonsensical. Sartre (*Existentialism and Humanism*, pp. 23-6) challenges all arguments against existentialism as quietism, pessimism, etc., and claims that it is a philosophy of activism and optimism in a posterior cultural process. Ussher (*Journey Through Dread*, p. 14) retorting Marxist contention that existentialism is 'the last phase of Bourgeois Capitalism' says that existentialism 'is the last phase of something rather more important than capitalism: namely the Western belief in words, concepts and objectified values.'

22. *Ibid.*; Ch. I. According to Ussher, Kierkegaard cannot be understood without Hegel, but '...Hegelianism is wrong without the corrective of Kierkegaardianism,' 54. Thilly: *A History of Philosophy*, pp. 480-6. Thilly refers to Hegel's will which becomes free from impulses in its rational self-determination but the existentialist will, we shall see, is a freedom from both impulses and reason in a full historical sense. Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, Ch. I, chiefly pp. 7, 8, 17, 23. Wahl: *A Short History of Existentialism*, pp. 2-5. Heinemann: *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, pp. 31-4.

23. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, pp. 18, 21-2, 43, 47, 55-8. Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*, pp. 6-7.

24. Vide Kierkegaard's *Repetition* and *The Point of View* (Translated by Lowrie, Oxford University Press) and also *Either / Or*, in 2 vols. Vol. I, Translated by Swenson, and Vol. II, translated by Lowrie, for details.

25. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, pp. 42-3, 55, 57-8. Collins: *The Mind of Kierkegaard* (Secker and Warburg, 1954), Ch. II.

ly in the aesthetic or intellectual phase, and missed totally the ethical or social; he projected himself by a leap to a saintly or religious life, and had the transcendental psychological experience of dread, fear or trembling before God construed in a post-theological sense. This order of psychological stand expresses a faith,<sup>26</sup> a broad religious experience following a preliminary psychological life of decision or repetition.

In Nietzsche<sup>27</sup> also there is a similar revolt against the Platonic—Hegelian tradition when he points out from his new awakening that man has no *nature* or *essence* but only a *human condition* or *historicity*. It is not a sceptical attitude of a Hume in the order of pure intellectual reflection; it is a total departure from that tradition—a despair raised to the level of negation and a stand on ever-emergent *will*. Nietzsche's is a choice for a novel psychological project undeterred by such preliminary mental experiences of restlessness, dizziness and nausea; his goal is Dionysian—a choice for reflection and action to establish a new order of men and society, proving oneself either a superman or a neurotic losing oneself totally.<sup>28</sup>

This post-conceptual and post-theological psychological attitude of Nietzsche is utilised in a post-phenomenological direction by Heidegger and Sartre, developing the existentialist notion of *negation* and *separation* further.

Jaspers and Marcel, who are deeply influenced by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, not only deviate from the past-conceptual-empirical tradition but also separate themselves from the major contemporary trends of Husserl, Bergson and others. From this stand they declare that *human condition* has still a place in the complex scientific socio-cultural process with prospect which determines its broad historicity and gauges its future psychological projects along various orders of comprehensive experience.<sup>29</sup> Both Kierke-

26. Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, pp. 14-5. Ruggiero: *Existentialism*, p. 29 '...in faith we are not given a purely intellectual relation...'

27. Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, Ch. II. 'Nietzsche and Kierkegaard are as divided as poles and as close as twins,' p. 23. Nietzsche 'had no knowledge of Kierkegaard', p. 38. Vide also Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*, p. 9 (Mairet's introduction).

28. Lavrin: *Nietzsche* (Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1948) for Nietzsche's psychology and type of mind.

29. For a detailed historical survey of German Existentialists, Jaspers and Heidegger, vide Brock: *An Introduction to Contemporary German Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1935). According to Brock, Jaspers goes



gaard and Nietzsche suffer from persistent psychological experiences as anxiety, dread, dizziness, nausea etc., till the resolute decision (repetition or eternal recurrence) is arrived at, but to both Jaspers and Marcel there is no such experience of *suffering*. Both are well-placed in their deep psychological explorations or discoveries, and they can claim an efficiency which their predecessors lacked. Jaspers and Marcel admit the human condition in all separation—it is a *being-there* or *being-for-all* for Jaspers, and it is a bare individual with a theoretical proneness which sets up problems, for Marcel. This undeniable cosmic socio-cultural situation has to be abandoned for the further possibility of the human condition in a transcendent order of *being-for-self* (*Existenz*) liberty, freedom, intuition, silence or voice, for Jaspers, or *presence*, information of oneself to oneself or mystery, for Marcel. There is a further transcendence from this order to interpersonal situation, which is *being-in-itself* or communication to Jaspers, and *fidelity* or faith in the presence of an other-than-me to Marcel;<sup>30</sup> this final order suggests that individual by himself is not self-sufficient.<sup>31</sup>

To both Jaspers and Marcel, the discovery of different orders of experience is a discontinuous process—a shift from the past and contemporary objectivist-subjectivist propensity. Marcel claims that his coincidence with Jaspers was discovered later by his study

beyond Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Husserl, pp. 97-108. For Jaspers' main philosophical standpoint see his *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*, translated by Manheim (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1950). For details about Marcel, the French existentialist, vide his *The mystery of Being*, in two vols.—Vol. I (*Reflection and Mystery*), Vol. II (*Faith and Reality*)—Harvell Press Ltd., 1950 and 1951. For a general summary of Marcel's standpoint, vide his *The Philosophy of Existence*, translated by Harari (Philosophical Library, 1949). For his criticism of Bradley and Bergson, vide, *ibid.*, pp. 91-5.

30. For Jaspers' experience of liberty and communication, vide Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, pp. 57-60. For Marcel's presence and fidelity, *ibid.*, pp. 68-76.

31. Leighton: *Jaspers' Existential Philosophy in Perspectives in Philosophy* (Essays by members of the department of philosophy: The Ohio State University, 1953), pp. 3-8, 12. For Jaspers' transcendent experience vide Troisfontaines: *Existentialism and Christian Thought*, pp. 13-5 and for Marcel's criticism of Hegel and the neo-Hegelians, *ibid.*, p. 16. Heinemann (*Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, pp. 70-4, 77-81) criticises Jaspers as a 'gliding philosopher' with no stable logic or metaphysics. Vide Ruggiero: *Existentialism*, pp. 35, 36-39, for a criticism and appreciation of Jaspers in relation to Heidegger. For criticism of Marcel's mystical empiricism, *ibid.*, p. 43-4.

of Jaspers and hence it is purely accidental.<sup>32</sup> This paper points out that the coincidence is purely psychological and it cannot be analysed by any traditional or contemporary scheme of reflection. Existentialists in general are *solitaries*, though they have deep psychological affinities.

The awareness of the human condition, according to the above existentialists, implies the possibility of concrete psychological projects in a universe which is basically spatio-temporal, interpersonal and socio-cultural. The psychological projects of the existentialists positively expressed or negatively implied, have a deep phenomenological implication. In Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel there is a leap from one order of psychological experience to another by continuous *decision* or *exploration* beyond all conceptual-empirical-theological aspects. In this there is a claim of a psychological condition to go beyond the apparent spatio-temporal world to a non-temporal world, where a personal relationship with an *other*—God or other persons—is possible. Nietzsche's psychological condition implies a continuous cancellation of conceptual-empirical-theological projects and placing of man to an order of superject will whereby a total replacement of this order and value is possible. His stand is all human (or superhuman) and in no way theistic or supra-temporal. Trained under the phenomenological reflections of Husserl<sup>33</sup> and awakened to the psychological conditions of the existentialists in general, in both temporal and non-temporal aspects, Heidegger tries to set up a new psychological condition or possibility. He extends Husserl's abstract phenomenological reflections to the spatio-temporal world, to other persons and to death.<sup>34</sup> Death, the final principle of negation, according to Heidegger, cancels the human mode—its spatio-temporal habitat and its psychological projects.<sup>35</sup> He refrains from placing the human condition and psychological project to a non-temporal world—God, comprehensive experience or interpersonal

32. Marcel: *The Philosophy of Existence*, Introductory note, p. vii.

33. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, pp. 70-1, for details about Heidegger *Ibid.*, Ch. II, Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, Ch. V and Heidegger: *Existence and Being*, with introduction by Brock (Vision Press Ltd., 1949).

34. Wahl (*A Short History of Existentialism*, pp. 11-27) explains very elaborately Heidegger's five notions of transcendence with reference to temporal and death-ridden man, for, 'God could never be a transcendent being.'

35. *Ibid.*, "From this point of view, the philosophy of Heidegger is an expansion, and in a sense, negation of Kierkegaardian individualism," p. 20, Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, p. 73.





experience. According to him, the human condition and human project, as awakened from the existentialist stand and phenomenological training, do not provide grounds for reflection away from the spatio-temporal world and socio-cultural process. His is not, therefore, a philosophical project towards a continuous temporality with a profound vital-intuitive experience of a Bergson, quitting the spatial-intellectual propensity. Heidegger's motive is not for any construction either in the past existentialist or in the Bergsonian way,<sup>36</sup> though Bergson's psychological stand may be associated in certain aspects with the existentialist and phenomenological temperament.

The above psychological stand of Heidegger, in relation to the post-conceptual-empirical-theological projects of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Marcel, Husserl and Bergson, does not imply a fresh ontology. It is an advanced existentialist-phenomenological-intuitional stand without any specific commitment or proneness. It tries to discern a sober psychological awareness which is expressed by *dread*—a general concern for an event (death) which is to happen but is not yet;<sup>37</sup> by its very presence death can confer a right valuation to one's psychological projects. So long as one is living one has to stand by a sense of values and be responsible for one's day to day occupation, but with death all values or interests are devalued or nullified. It is a complex psychological stand with responsibility (care) and detachment, so that there is no pessimism or recklessness that comes to one who is subject to the pure conceptual-empirical modes of thought. It can transcend the distressing psychological experiences that meet Kierkegaard and Nietzsche in their pre-decision stages, for, here the choice is not immediate but rests on a final determination; it is not a

36. To Ussher (*Ibid.*, p. 65) Heidegger 'is indeed the last of the great explorers in the history of thought...' In him, Husserl's 'intentionality became transcendence and project; and these concepts were identified with *Time*, almost in the sense of Bergson's *Duree*,' p. 71. '...one sees that for Heidegger the very nature of Being is constituted of temporality, and he strives to bring Space itself into one of his moments of Time, i.e., the Present; thereby assenting, to a certain extent, to the Bergsonian theory of Space and Time. Nevertheless, one cannot say that his ontology is complete.' (Wahl: *A Short History of Existentialism*, p. 22). Vide also Mounier: *Existentialist Philosophies* (Rockliff, 1951), p. 5, and Heidegger's *Existence and Being*, pp. 70-2, for elaborate discussions about the human mode in relation to time and death.

37. To Radhakrishnan (*Indian Philosophical Congress, 1950, Silver Jubilee Commemoration Vol. II*, p. 15) Heidegger's sense of nothingness is not so much a metaphysical concept as a psychological state.

psychological veiling as one may find in the non-temporal projects of Jaspers and Marcel. It is a deep awakening to one's human condition as it is having its finality in death; there is no hide and seek. It is an open facing of life in all its nakedness.<sup>38</sup> Though Ruggiero is sceptical about Heidegger's philosophic attitude, he nevertheless admits Heidegger's boldness and says, '... never in the history of thought has such a radical nihilism been expressed and what is more, with such impassivity and detachment.'<sup>39</sup>

The existentialist thought takes a final radical turn in Sartre, Heidegger's outstanding French disciple, who had also an opportunity of being influenced by Husserl directly.<sup>40</sup>

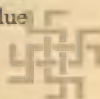
According to Sartre, existentialists mentioned above, are concerned with separating human condition from traditional conceptual-empirical-theological consciousness, projecting it either non-temporally to God, (Kierkegaard), Being (Jaspers), Mystery (Marcel), or temporally to death (Heidegger); but they are not completely free from some form of reference to the *other* or *given*, hence they are locked to a kind of reflection which is objective. Even Husserl's reflection, being abstractly phenomenological, is objective and has no concern with the deep transcendent subjectivity Sartre has in view. Sartre aims at a complete freedom of human consciousness pursuing *separateness* to a region of a total voidness so that he can declare that the emergent human consciousness with which he is concerned, after his awakening in the line of existentialist thought, is a total *not*, a *no-thing*, beyond all objective propensities.<sup>41</sup>

38. Both Wahl (*A Short History of Existentialism*, p. 22) and Ruggiero (*Existentialism*, pp. 31-2) explain *dread* in relation to Kierkegaard's anguish. This paper wants to clarify that according to Heidegger though it is a similar psychological stand, it has to be understood in the special context of death.

39. Wahl: (*A Short History of Existentialism*, pp.27-38) and Ussher (*Journey Through Dread*, p. 84) are critical about Heidegger. Ussher says, 'No philosopher ever aimed higher or ventured further in his thought than Heidegger; no philosopher, in his public attitudes, has at certain moments sunk so low.'

40. Wahl: *A Short History of Existentialism*, p. 28. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, p. 93, for details vide ch. II, and Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, Ch. VI.

41. Blackham (*Ibid*) points out that Sartre's '...consciousness and its objects, the *pour soi* and the *en soi* are not merely in contrast...' they are 'related by an unbridgeable separation.' (p. 111) 'The ideal project...in the world is the *nisus* towards some form of unity of the *pour soi* with the *en soi* in a totality which saves both. That is in principle impossible. Man aspires to be god, but god is a self-contradiction. Nevertheless, this absolute value is the lure which governs our lives,' (p. 113).





Sartre tries to revive and reinforce the transcendent subjectivity of Kierkegaard in the post-phenomenological context of western thought. Like other existentialists he has a sense of the human condition as a mode or possibility, but he does not like to direct it beyond one's deep subjectivity, though there is an awareness of all possible projects in a full historical sense. Sartre, therefore, does not interpret Jaspers' *liberty* or Marcel's *presence* in the direction of *communication* or *fidelity*.<sup>42</sup> In the psychological projects of Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel, Sartre finds some form of theological tendency, and in the case of Heidegger, a fall into the nihilistic process of death, for, they cannot fully separate themselves from the conceptual-empirical tradition. From Sartre's advanced existentialist stand, the very admission of death as nihilating the human condition is to subject oneself to objective propensity. From this standpoint, the petrifying look of other people in human situation, is more troublesome than the final stroke of death. He suggests that one can be free from the dread of both if one changes one's objective attitude and dwells in a transcendent psychological attitude treating all individuals as *subjects*.<sup>43</sup>

In this advanced stand beyond usual philosophic propensities, Sartre is very critical about Alexander's reflection of an ideal deity emerging beyond human mentality. The transcendent subjectivity of Sartre is not emergent from a basic objective process, nor is it a process to a transcendent situation, perpetuating itself in an objective manner beyond the present condition.<sup>44</sup>

Separating human condition from non-temporal and temporal projects of the existentialists under consideration, Sartre presents the human condition in all its nakedness. His standpoint of *separation* is not rejection, it, therefore, does not fall into the reflective mode of pessimism, scepticism or nihilism. His is not a disposition before decision, hence it is not despair, anxiety, nausea or dizziness; it is not also a relative decision of liberty or presence for a posterior psychological project of communication and fidelity; nor is it finally a general disposition of dread to await a final destiny of death.<sup>45</sup>

42. Wahl: *A Short History of Existentialism*, p. 11, "Communication has consistently been one of the major problems in the philosophies of existence ... clumsy and failing in Sartre, communication is always there—at least as a problem." This paper, however, does not support Wahl's contention.

43. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, pp. 111, 120.

44. Blackham: *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, p. 113.

45. Sartre: *Existentialism and Humanism*, pp. 55-6.



With the discovery of inner *not* of one's transcendent subjectivity, Sartre can stay balanced before the notion of God or no God, before culture or no culture, for what is to be faced always is one's naked self, which abhors all superimpositions and enjoys itself by negating its projects; before its nullifying modes even death cannot stand.<sup>46</sup> Expressed in classical terms, Sartre's attitude is that of an eternal solitary Orestes<sup>47</sup> who chooses his deep subjectivity, and remains a king without subjects or kingdom. Sartre's stand, in this present European condition of scientific and technological projects dehumanising man, is a necessity, to give a new turn to civilization and values; his attitude of resistance to conceptualise or objectify is a redeeming feature unveiling man as man.

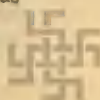
If one views Sartre's human condition in such nakedness, the return to one's subjectivity cannot be construed in terms of Hegelian conceptual processes of *being* and *nothing* eliminating *synthesis*, as urged by Wahl, Ussher or Marcel.<sup>48</sup> Sartre's subjectivity is not a regressive process to counteract the pressures of the Germans during their occupation of France in the last War as Heine-mann suggests.<sup>49</sup> Sartre's really is a conscious return to a transcendent psychological attitude or mode by separation from the past conceptual-empirical-theological-phenomenological projects and

46. *Ibid.*, p. 56, Wahl: *A Short History of Existentialism*, vide Discussion, p. 39, Gurvitch thinks that 'in no philosophy is existence found to be more impoverished or diluted than precisely in: *existentialism*...In Sartre it becomes a psychological isolation which nullifies itself...As the traditional empiricism amounted to a total destruction or transformation of experience into a chaos of sensation, so existentialism applies itself to the task of reducing existence to Zero.' This paper goes contrary to this opinion and places Sartre to a prospective existentialist stand and its parallel is sought outside the bounds of western philosophy.

47. Troisfontaines: *Existentialism and Christian Thought*, p. 62.

48. Wahl: *A Short History of Existentialism*, pp. 28-9. Ussher: *Journey Through Dread*, pp. 53-4. Marcel: *The Philosophy of Existence*, pp. 57-66, Marcel admits the intellectual greatness of Sartre but apprehends that by rejecting superior psychological projects and revolting against objectivism, Sartre might fall into some primitive rationalistic atheism or materialism or an extravagant dogmatic negativism of Heidegger.

49. Heine-mann (*Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, pp. 111-7, 121-2) points out that in opposition to Heidegger, Sartre 'transfers nothingness from the realm of the object to that of the subject, and grafting it on a philosophy of consciousness, he maintains that we, i.e., our consciousness, bring negation and destruction into this world,' p. 122. In this paper a different interpretation of 'not' or transcendent consciousness of Sartre has been brought out.





also the half-hearted relative projects of the objectivist existentialists as Blackham<sup>50</sup> perceives by his serious study of Sartre's voluminous philosophical work, *L'Être et le Néant*.

Understood from the broad background and development of the philosophic ideas from Thales to Hegel and from Kierkegaard to Heidegger, Sartre's transcendent psychological *separation* plays the same role as the psychological *separation* of the last of the Buddhist schools, the Yogācāras, in the background of the Upaniṣads and the other Buddhist schools. The Yogācāra separation of the transcendent subjectivity, understood with all cultural speciality of Indian thought-process, is a revolt against the specific psychological stands of pre-logical objectivism of the Vaibhāṣikas, post-logical phenomenism of the Sautrāntikas and the prospective critical attitude beyond objectivism and phenomenism of the Mādhyamikas, all of whom revolted against the conceptual-empirical reflections of the Upaniṣads. The Yogācāra stand, though a yogic stand and very much different from Sartre's normal human stand, is comparable in an aspect with Sartre's transcendent *not*, for, it nullifies all psychological projects, objective or subjective, viz., the empirical-phenomenological-psychological process of birth-death-rebirth and its own foundational trans-empirical psychological construct of dynamic consciousness—the ideation-store or *ālayaviññāna*.<sup>51</sup>

50. *Six Existentialist Thinkers*, p. 110.

51. For details about the Buddhist schools vide, Stcherbatsky: *The Central Conception of Buddhism* (Royal Asiatic Society, 1923), Takakusu: *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy* (Hawaii University, 1949), Sogen: *Systems of Buddhist Thought* (Cal. University, 1912) and Murti: *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955). Also vide writer's *Changing Phases of Buddhist Thought* in the Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress, 1954, for his comments. Modifying his cursory statement about the existentialists in that paper, the writer now thinks that of all western thinkers the existentialists, in an aspect, can be placed in a similar philosophic current of experience with the Buddhist schools, for they exhibit in different ways the voidness of the past conceptual-empirical-theological-phenomenological trends. Suzuki, an exponent of Zen Buddhism of China and Japan, develops this trend in a pronounced manner in the background of past Indian and present western thought. He suggests that the Zen ideal of deep psychological experience, Satori or Sambodhi (enlightenment) is nothing but a Chinese rendering of deconceptualising experience developed in *Śradhotpadaśāstra* of Ashvaghosa (vide Suzuki's *Aśvaghosha: Discourse on the Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*: Translated from Chinese, The Open Court Publishing Co., 1900). Lankavatāra Sutra, a posterior work in the same line of thought carried to China by Bodhidharma around 520 A.D. and handed over to Huik'e (487-593 A.D.), became the foundation of Zen

There is no attempt here to suggest that Sartre and the Yogācāras share the same notion of subjectivity or voidness in any strict logico-metaphysical sense. Through the observation of history of philosophy in general, both western and eastern, it may be noted, that in the advanced stages, the philosophical reflection tends to be psychological, and as such there can be no hard and fast strictness in the matter of comparison as was expected in an age when the thought-process was strictly logical or metaphysical. The comparison between Sartre and the Yogācāras has been brought in to show their psychological affinities though separated by age, culture and temperament. There is no motive here to elevate or disparage any one.

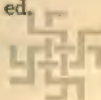
The existentialists, though differ among themselves, aim to ventilate one common major trend—the de-conceptualisation and de-objectification of traditional experiences, and in this, they come close in spirit and temperament to the philosophic condition of the Buddhist schools who influence so greatly the subsequent thought-process of India, China and Japan.<sup>52</sup> In India the entire post-Buddhist thought of Gauḍapāda, Śāṅkara and post-Śāṅkarites bears this effect,<sup>53</sup> and it does not cease to affect the contemporary thought-processes. With great liberality, Radhakrishnan, in this age, can hold a view of Spirit, God, Universe and Absolute, not on logico-metaphysical-theological but on deep psychological grounds, separating himself from east-west conceptual-objectivist tendencies, finding answer for everything by a return to one's deep self.<sup>54</sup> This awakening has prepared the Indian mind to initiate a

Buddhism. Huik'e, though thoroughly acquainted with Confucian and Taoist literature, abandoned his traditional reflection and welcomed its deconceptualising and deobjectifying suggestions. (for details vide Suzuki: *Studies in Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1930) and *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Second Series, Luzac & Co., 1933, pp. 23-6.

52. Suzuki: *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism* (Rider & Co., 1948).

53. Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy* Vol. II. (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1930) pp. 453-65 for Gauḍapāda, and pp. 475-85 for Śāṅkara. Gauḍapāda's standpoint, in the background of the Buddhist thought of the Yogācāras, is an effort to realise a deeper subjectivity beyond phenomenalism and is a pre-Śāṅkarite stand on an absolute experience. It was perfected by the practical genius of Śāṅkara who could rightly evaluate the various orders of phenomenological experience from a superior psychological stand.

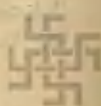
54. Radhakrishnan: *The Spirit of Man in Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, ed. by Radhakrishnan & Muirhead (George Allen & Unwin, Second Edition, 1952) pp. 483-502. *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan* ed. by Schilpp (Tudor Publishing Co., 1952), pp. 791-9.





liberal policy of co-existence with other nations, races, religions and ideologies with full sympathy and appreciation of man as man in a broad psychological sense.

Existentialism in its development, and not in its commitments, is an awakening not only for the western but also for the eastern mind, which can once again review its past and propagate with fresh vigour the resurgence of man from the depths of his supreme subjectivity. This paper opens up an avenue for broadening the scope of philosophy in the sphere of psychological experiences deviating from the traditional logico-metaphysical schemes, and hopes to facilitate the cultural processes and possibilities of many emergent countries and peoples who are struggling against all types of imperialism and bourgeois ideas.



# Personality and Society

*Presidential Address*

## SECTION : PSYCHOLOGY

*by*

DR. B. KUPPUSWAMI

*Mysore University*

Permit me to express my deep sense of gratitude to the authorities of the Indian Philosophical Congress in having invited me to preside over the Psychology Section of the Congress this year. I am particularly happy that I am given this opportunity in the Annamalainagar Session as Chidambaram is one of the highly cherished places in the country with its long history of religious and cultural attainment associated with our heritage.

I propose to recall to you some of the outstanding developments in modern Psychology regarding the very important problem of the development of personality. If I may say so, the goal of the entire work of the country to-day is the development of personality. In the struggle for political freedom and now in the great endeavour to retain political freedom and in the achievement of social justice and economic progress our country has been engaged in the task of building up the personality of its citizens. So a review of the development in the field of Psychology in the last half a century regarding the development of personality will help us to gain some insight.

There are two important aspects about the growth of a human infant. Every human infant enters a society. It is born in a home where there is a continuous social process. Secondly the infant enters his society as an organism. It is a living reacting organism with, as the Taittiriya Upanishad points out, the *annamaya*, *pranamaya* and *manomaya* kosas. The biogenic drives are very powerful in infancy. This is what Freud called the 'ID'. The ID is the sum-total of biological drives or the pleasure seeking demands. The basic ID demands at this stage in the growth of the infant are hunger, thirst, comfort, and escape from pain. Freud also pointed out that the pleasure seeking of the infant starts with the intense enjoyment of sucking and called this the oral sucking



stage in the growth of the personality. Another characteristic of this stage is that it is passive. All need satisfactions come to him without effort. The only effort is to cry. Gradually the infant learns that the mother or her surrogate is the source from which sensations and pleasures arise. As the infant becomes conscious of his mother as a separate individual he loves her. He imitates her in many ways (smiling, gestures, babbling, etc.). This is the earliest phase of identification, the most important process in the formation of the personality. With further growth the infant seeks and demands pleasure instead of passively waiting for it.

This is the stage which Freud identified as the oral sadistic stage. Pleasure is still derived from the mouth. But now it is through biting rather than sucking. The difference between itself and the environment becomes more pronounced. It is at this stage according to Freud that the ego starts. The ego development coincides more or less with the onset of the oral sadistic stage with the active self-assertion and seizing of satisfactions. Thus we see that the ego arises in the course of the development of the infant in its interaction with the physical and social environment. The biological entity becomes personal.

At this point it will be of interest to briefly outline the findings by child psychologists. The detailed observations of Preyer and Shinn in the last quarter of 19th century have been confirmed by the controlled observations of Gesell and his associates in the recent years. The infant does not experience even the parts of his own body as his. Psychologically, the parts of the body become his only in the course of his development. It is through repeated contacts and manipulations of this body and the objects in his environment that the baby learns to differentiate his body from the outside world. The way in which the infant bites objects as well as his own fingers or hand demonstrate that he is not distinguishing between parts of his body and the other objects. But the biting of his own body leads to pain and this reinforcement leads to discrimination and differentiation. On the basis of his observation Piaget asserts that at first the infant floats "about in an undifferentiated absolute." In this undifferentiated absolute there are no psychological boundaries between the subjective and the objective. Thus the distinct ego experience is the "result of a gradual and progressive dissociation and not of a primitive intuition."<sup>1</sup> Piaget has shown how the resistances of the world lead

1. J. Piaget: *Judgement and Reasoning in the Child*, Kegan Paul, 1928.

the child to make adaptation to reality. It is on account of the external resistances that he makes distinctions between what is himself and what is not, what is wish and what is reality. The child's behaviour is at first dominated by autism. It is governed chiefly by the satisfactions of momentary needs and wishes. The child acts and talks as though his own wishes and desires are the centre of reference of the whole world. But with the increasing resistances from the external world physical as well as social the undifferentiated absolute breaks down. The realization of reciprocal relations between self and other arises. This realization depends on the ability of the child to separate himself from the external world.

The controlled observations of Gesell<sup>2</sup> help us to delineate the various stages in the ego formation. By one year there is a greater freedom of movement of the infant's arms and hands and he uses them to explore his body. In the second year there is an increased amount of social interaction and this ultimately leads to the recognition of others. During the third year he reacts to his name and before long he uses the personal pronouns "You" "Me" and "I". By three years he knows his own sex with assurance. Between five and six he has a sense of status and propriety. There is social conformity. He does not want to be different from others of his group. Around six he begins to set up standards for himself.

In the meantime there is language development. With language development there is a more adequate discrimination between self and non-self. There is also the formation of self-image and the elaboration of the ego.

At this point it will be useful to refer to the work of Itard. In 1799 ten years after the French Revolution three hunters in France came across a naked boy of 11 or 12 who tried to escape them by climbing a tree. Later a French Minister of State with scientific interest got him to be sent to Paris for a careful study. Thousands of people came to see him. They came to see the embodiment of Rousseau's "noble savage." They saw only a dirty child affected with spasmodic movements and often convulsions, "who bit and scratched those who opposed him, who showed no sort of affection for those who attended him; and who was in short indifferent to every thing and attentive to nothing."<sup>3</sup> The

2. A. Gesell and F. L. Ilg: *Infant and the Child in culture of today*, Harper, 1943, pp. 336-340.

3. Itard: *The Wild Boy of Aveyron*, C. 7





great Pinel declared the boy a congenital idiot for though 11 or 12 years old he was no more intelligent than an infant of one year. But Itard disagreed with Pinel. He could not reconcile feeble-mindedness with his survival of all the hardships of wild life. Itard started the boy's education with training his sensations and emotions. After five years of patient work Itard abandoned as he found that he could not improve the boy any further. From a wild savage he had trained him to live in human society and express some of his simplest wants in written language. But he never equalled the ability of other boys of his age. The lack of human society in early childhood had retarded the boy's growth. He received kind treatment till he died in 1828 when he was about 40.

The wild boy of Aveyron is not an isolated case. We have the more recent wolf children of Midnapore.<sup>4, 5</sup> In 1920 Rev. Singh found among three wolves and two cubs a girl aged about 8 and another girl aged about an year and a half. While the wild boy of Aveyron was an untutored savage the wolf children were like wolves in their behaviour. They could not walk upright and were completely nocturnal animals. Unlike the wild boy they had a keen sense of smell and sound. Only the older girl survived and after patient training she learned to live with other girls in the orphanage and learned to run simple errands and do useful work such as looking after babies and pulling the panka. She could walk upright only 5½ years after she came to the orphanage. At 15 she could not speak as well as the average two-year child. She died in 1929 when she was about 17.

The significant implication of these two studies is that even sensations and bodily needs are not a part of the original equipment. Montessori placed a great deal of emphasis on the training of senses in her work with feeble-minded and normal children. The effect of isolation from human society is very far reaching indeed. It had affected the growth of intelligence as well. Gesell estimates that the wild boy's mental age at the end of training was about six and that of the wolf girl about three and a half. Later training could not compensate for the lack of human social interaction in the early years. These studies substantiate the conclusions of Freud and Adler regarding the great significance of early years in a child's growth.

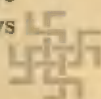
4. Singh and Zingg: *Wolf Children and Feral man*.

5. A. Gesell: *Wolf Child and the Human Child*, Methuen 1941.



We can now turn to the anthropological evidence regarding the influence of child-training and culture on personality. The studies of Mead, Benedict, and other social anthropologists have demonstrated how different practices in childhood training lead to differences in personality and culture. Personality traits like aggressiveness, timidity etc., are to be found in different degrees in different groups. We are now realizing how the way of life of a group affects the behaviour of the individuals in the group. Kardiner has used the concept 'basic personality structure' to understand the influence of culture on personality. Human beings are so much social creatures that we can understand them only by knowing something of the group to which they belong. In our own country we find that the people of different states and linguistic groups reveal striking differences to such an extent that some people are tempted to think that we have not only different linguistic groups but different sub-cultures in India. The social anthropologists and social psychologists have been able to find not only the differences in the various groups but also the causes which bring about these differences. We have now found that these differences are cultural and not biological. It was this discovery that led thinkers like Adler to renounce altogether the concept of innate traits and the radical Watson to assert that he can make any given child to grow up as a successful professional man or a delinquent or a shiftless unskilled labourer. This is the old controversy between the Platonic doctrine of innate ideas and Locke's doctrine of 'tabularasa'. The recent findings of child psychologists, psychometricians, social psychologists and social anthropologists indicate that neither of these extreme positions help us to arrive at the truth.

Many crucial studies have been made in the last half-a-century to study the individual differences with respect to general intelligence and special aptitudes. Studies have also been made to discover the conditions responsible for group differences regarding abilities. The protagonists of heredity from the days of Galton to Burt try to account for these existing differences between groups on the basis of heredity while thinkers from Watson to Klineberg have produced evidence to the contrary. It will be of interest to recall here the significant findings of two recent studies in our country. Bhatia of Allahabad tested rural as well as Urban children who were in schools and those who had never gone to any school. The children were between 11 and 16 years in age. He used performance tests of intelligence so that schooling will have practically no effect whatever. He found that the illiterate boys





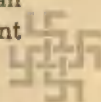
were absolutely different from the boys in the school. The differences were so great that he had to prepare and publish two different tables of norms one for the literate children and the other for the illiterate children. We must remember that these children literate as well as illiterate come from the same groups born and brought up in the same or similar homes. The other study is that made by Varadachar in Mysore. He studied three groups of children, Brahmins, Non-Brahmins and Harijans. He used Raven's progressive matrices, a perceptual test. The children were all from the city. They were studying in the elementary schools, of the age group 7-9. He controlled the socio-economic conditions by testing only the children of parents earning less than one hundred rupees per month. He found that the three caste groups did not reveal any differences whatever. These two studies taken together show the remarkable influence of schooling on the differences in ability.

What then is the picture of personality which emerges from these studies? The newborn infant is just a living creature with the basic biological needs. It is the very helplessness of the individual in infancy that makes it possible for social interaction to have profound influence on the development of personality. This does not mean that personality is entirely a social product. Social influences can operate only when the biological unit is there. This is the reason why some thinkers look upon psychology as a bio-social science. If the child is not exposed to social interaction he does not grow up to be a human being at all. He will be just a living creature like the wild boy of Aveyron or the wolf girl, Kamala. We have similiary the high grade mental defectives who have no ego consciousness or ego development whatever. They are hardly human. They are just at the ID level to use Freud's terminology. This is the raw material of personality. As Sheriff puts it "The ego is not present at birth in the human child. In any society the behaviour of a new born baby is dominated by the satisfaction of basic needs. He has yet to become a socialized being. This socialization, this formation of the ego is not a mystic process. It is inferred from the behaviour of the growing child."<sup>6</sup> Freud asserted that the formation of the ego and the super-ego is due to the contact of the child with the physical and social reality. A very significant part of this growth in personality is achieved before the child is six years old as Freud, Adler and Gesell have shown.

6. M. Sheriff: *An Outline of Social Psychology*, Harper, 1948, pp. 253-254.

We can now take into account the findings arrived at by using the two concepts socialization and social norms. For the survival and growth of personality, social interaction is as basic as breathing and nutrition are for the survival and growth of the body; the child is socialized by the assimilation of the social norms and in his turn after growth and maturity he is responsible for the socialization of the next generation. The radical youth becomes a conservative adult. Each preceding generation feels that the next generation is way-ward and undisciplined. Always our times are the best. But we forget this basic fact and thus the conflict between generations within the home as well as outside is generated. Sheriff has demonstrated experimentally how the social norms are established. The judgment of the extent of autokinetic movement is determined in a subject by the values given by the other member in the group. Without deliberation the individual conforms to the consistent judgment of the other. Of course in society individuals are required to conform, particularly the infant behaviour is regulated by the mother and later by both the parents, the siblings and others in the family. The process continues till the growing child or youth actively strives to make the norms of his group his own. By his clinical observations Freud showed that the infant internalizes the external do's and don'ts and thus forms the super-ego. Sheriff has experimentally demonstrated how this internalization takes place and persists. Thus continually there is growth in the internalization from infancy to maturity. First conformity arises on the basis of pressures from the parents, playmates and the police. Gradually the social norms are so well incorporated that external pressure is unnecessary. With the experience of parenthood the internalization of the norm and the conformity becomes pronounced, since the individual in his turn continues the social process and gets his child to conform. With the birth of his child and with the death of his parent the individual incorporates in himself the social norms in a more pronounced degree than before. He does his best to become a good member of his group so that he can get his child to become a good member.

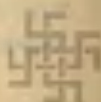
Thus we find that the process of ego formation is a continuous process. Through this the hardly conscious infant grows up to be a fully self conscious individual. This process cannot take place unless there is social interaction. Each individual is unique, but all personalities in any group have a number of traits in common. Newcomb gives the analogy of the finger prints. The human finger prints have many things in common. Still the finger print





of any given individual is so unique that modern criminology and law use it to establish complicity in a crime. All the various qualities of personality like uniquenesses, persistence, organization etc, can be traced to social interaction and the assimilation and internalization of social norms. There is no ego-formation without socialization and assimilation of social norm.

As we observed at the start, our country is now actively engaged in development of the personality of the millions of citizens in our land. Our ancient culture became stagnant because it stopped short in the process. Eighty to ninety percent of the population have been permitted to live at what we to-day look upon as sub-human level without personal hygiene, without education, without aspiration. Similarly UNESCO and other organizations of U.N.O. are engaged in the task of building up the personality of individuals in the undeveloped countries. Obviously in this great task the social sciences have as great a part to play as the physical sciences. Mere technological advance without a corresponding advance in the development of personality will surely spell disaster. This is the re-enactment in the world of to-day what the great sage Valmiki visualised in the great epic Ramayana. Mere advancement in the technique of production without a corresponding advance in the art of living will not enable us to build up prosperity and progress. Let us not forget the individual in our attempts to provide the basic physical needs. Catering to the annamaya and pranamaya kosas without caring for the vignanamaya and anandamaya kosas will lead to degeneration and not regeneration of humanity.



# Some Structuralist Presuppositions and Mystical Philosophy

*Presidential Address*

## SECTION : LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS

*by*

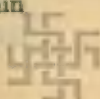
C. T. K. CHARI

*Madras Christian College*

I am sensible of the great honour the Indian Philosophical Congress has extended to me by electing me President of the "Logic and Metaphysics" Section for the current year; all the more so, since various circumstances beyond my control have enforced my absence from the Congress Sessions so far. You have most generously overlooked my remissness and allowed me to drag the tatters of my logic and metaphysics before you on this occasion. The aims which you have set before me are too exalted to admit of even partial fulfilment.

(1)

I shall begin by reminding you of a very familiar but not very favourable comparison that is instituted between metaphysics and mathematics. We are told that whereas metaphysics, like religion and dress, is generally peculiar to regional groups, the language of mathematics is universal notwithstanding the many "natural languages" spoken by mathematicians. We hear that metaphysical theories are extraordinarily like the styles and fashions, or even the fads and crazes, studied by social psychologists. Styles and fashions sometimes change, even in India, and an older generation rebukes a younger with a stern *seniores priores*. We are assured that neither the metaphysician's status and functions nor his problems and solutions can ever be quite the same in two different countries and in two different periods of history. Even the wisest metaphysician is condemned to remain in a magnificent provincialism.

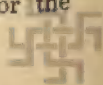




What must be our answer to the charge of cultural relativity? We must accept it but insist that mathematics is no less open to it. What difference there seems to be between the two disciplines may be explained by the widening and deepening of the cultural relativity in mathematics. The universality of mathematics was not miraculously born like Minerva from the head of Jupiter; it did not always exist in its present form. The number theory of the Greeks was in some ways peculiar to them; the Romans had their own system of numerals; the ancient Chinese thought of mathematics largely in terms of computations. Mathematics has not been unaffected by agriculture, navigation, commerce, warfare, physics, by the general social setting. The encirclement of the globe by technology, rapid means of communication and travel, the practice during the last half a century of holding international mathematical congresses, the visits of foreign mathematical scholars, international co-operation in the editing and publication of journals, have all contributed to the seeming universal character of modern mathematics. Why may we not look forward to a similar international co-operation and understanding in the meta-physical domain too?

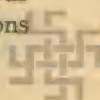
I make bold to suggest that, contrary to what is usually supposed, there are "culture-traits" but no irrevocably fixed "culture-patterns", "culture-bases" and "cultural life-cycles". The assumption of a plurality of unique cultures made by Spengler and others seriously belittles the possibilities implicit in the world of modern culture. "Culture-patterns" need not, and generally do not, diffuse as an interlocked unity. The aeroplane, the telephone and applied mathematics have a higher "coefficient of diffusion" (so to speak) than Kant's metaphysics, Russian mystical theology and Zen Buddhism. Viewed as "culture-traits", the latter are far more complex and diffuse far more slowly. One culture may, and often does, lean over to include what it finds valid in another culture with some distortion of its shape but retaining essential features. With the progressive widening of "culture-bases", civilization will not be inevitably and unambiguously "Eastern" or "Western". Mathematics, science and materialism are no more inalienable characteristics of the "West" than poetry, philosophy and spiritualism are of the "East".

The problem before Indian metaphysics, as I see it, is to escape the dangers of insularity, the degeneration into a mere "cult" as Radhakrishnan put it in a striking paragraph at the close of his *Indian Philosophy*. With the popularization of "Vedanta for the



West", the dangers have increased and not lessened. The Indian philosopher cannot afford to play the *laudator temporis acti*. He must shed the belief that his tradition is uniquely important only if it is untranslatable into foreign currency. He must cease to be the copiously eloquent moralist who never varies his idiom. The best in modern knowledge must be assimilated and interpreted by the East. As teachers of philosophy, we display our devout reverence—or is it devout irreverence?—to Descartes without bothering to remember that the "Father of modern philosophy" had a more workable algebra than the Greeks and tackled the problem of the "point-focus" of a spherical lens requiring for its solution a curve of the fourth degree or, in certain cases, of the second degree. We go into Kant's metaphysics with finely architectural detail, but we are apt to forget that officially as well as in his intellectual life Kant was lecturer (*Docent*) in physics at the University of Königsberg long before he ever speculated on metaphysics. A philosophical scrutiny of modern science, with all its hazards and uncertainties, is an urgently needed enterprise in India. We have to recruit more in our ranks from the side of mathematics and the sciences. Many attempted "reconciliations" of the Vedanta with modern science meander into obscurity if they do not border on extravagance. Modern science salted with enough Vedanta to give it a flavour may be full of comfort to some minds; but we have to find out whether it is not a dietary indiscretion. Whether we have to do with relativity or quantum mechanics, we cannot set up our own scientific ninepins for the pleasure of knocking them down. Kindergarten simplicity in these discussions may be neither trusted nor desired. We do not want the aura of science without its substance.

I fully realize that the scientific attitude can be overdone in India. The high enterprise of metaphysics in the East cannot be launched by simply turning out more young men trained along approved Occidental lines in the now fashionable semiotics. A brisk trade in scientific syntax, scientific semantics, and scientific pragmatics, is not everything. Cleverness and sophistication alone will not pilot us through the seas of metaphysical speculation. If the spiritual experiences of the seers in the East and in the West mean anything at all, the ultra-empirical standpoint (the "verifiable" is the sensuously observable) cannot possibly be accepted. On ultra-empiricist premises, metaphysical problems are indeed senseless (*sinnleeres*), as Kant shrewdly observed. Words like "God", "Soul" and "Immortality" would then be pseudo-words (*Scheinwörter*) and propositions about them pseudo-propositions.





(*Scheinsätze*). Is ultra-empiricism bound up with much mathematics and science?

## (2)

I suggest that an examination of some structuralist presuppositions of modern mathematics and science would be a most fascinating and rewarding task for Eastern metaphysicians. And it may well be a prolegomenon to a future philosophy of mysticism. Structuralism, as a formulated theory, is associated with the names of the distinguished mathematical physicists, A. S. Eddington and E. A. Milne, who held that epistemological generalizations have a greater security than empirical laws. It is well known that Eddington attempted to derive the "fine structure constant" ( $hc/2\pi e^2$ ) and the ratio of proton mass to electron mass from the number  $n$  of the dimensions of his postulated  $E$ -spaces. His theory led him to formulate the function  $f(n) = \frac{1}{2}n^2(n^2 + 1)$  which, for consecutive even numbers  $n = 2, 4, 6$ , yielded 10, 136, 616 respectively. Eddington associated  $n = 4$  with the phenomenally *a priori* number of dimensions of space-time. It has been suggested ironically that, if Eddington is right, certain lines of St. John's Book of Revelation ought to be re-written: "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea having  $f(2)$  horns and his number was  $f(6)$ ". I believe that Eddington and Milne attempted to take short and easy paths to a goal which can be reached only by a very long and thorny road.

It might be profitable, for many purposes, to begin by examining some basic concepts in a discipline like modern analytic topology. "Mathematical continuity" enters into a discussion of several branches of investigation ranging from quantum physics to statistical psychology. To be able to speak of a set of elements as a "topological space", we must enrich the concepts of an abstract set-algebra by a notion which is equivalent to the continuity which the mathematician attributes to the real-number continuum. Modern topology employs the "closure function", "closed and open sets" and "neighbourhoods". Each of these ideas, when subjected to suitable restrictions, can be shown to operate in the domain of real numbers. A basic topological notion of "distance" can be developed by means of postulates and examples of "metric spaces" can be constructed in which the basic notion is preserved: the real-number space, the Euclidean space of  $n$  dimensions, the Hilbert space the points of which are certain infinite sequences of real numbers, the complex Hilbert space whose points are certain specified infinite sequences of complex numbers, and so on.

One of the important topological concepts, which is a generalization of the idea of the Cartesian product of two spaces (Pontrjagin calls it a "skew product"), is that of a "fibre space". Problems connected with "fibre spaces" crop up in differential geometry, in the consideration of tangent spaces and tensor spaces over differentiable manifolds; and the concept is appropriate to a discussion of certain spaces of a Lie group.

The theory of probability has been discussed by philosophers sometimes exclusively from the standpoint of inductive logic. Von Mises, who laid the foundations of the modern "frequency" theory of probability, insisted on the impossibility of a "successful gambling system". He set up his irregular *Kollektiv* or "infinite random series" by laying down a condition which he called the "principle of excluded system" or "principle of indifference to ordinal selection." (*Stellungsauswahl*). An axiomatic approach to the problem along somewhat different lines has been found possible since Kolmogorov developed the analogies between the measure of a set and the probability of an event, the integral of a function and a random variable. We start with dummy-terms, indefinable "points" in a "label space" (*Merkmalraum*). Statements about "probability" can then be translated into statements about the "label space". J. L. Doob and others have explained how a measure-preserving transformation can be established in the translation. In the simplest case of two random variables, we substitute a two-dimensional distribution for an abstract probability measure. It can be shown that every uniformly bounded sequence of independent random variables conforms to an important theorem known as the "Central Limit Theorem" in modern mathematical statistics. There would seem to be a generalization of this which may apply to probability without expectation. A "Markov process" signifies a very large and important class of stochastic processes (with both discrete and continuous time parameters). It is the probability analogue of the classical physical model in which future development is completely determined by the present state and is independent of the way in which the present state has arisen.

There are doubting Thomases who wish to know whether applied probability theory can conceivably work without auxiliary assumptions about contingent empirical facts. K. Marbe denied the statistical independence of successive Bernoulli trials as in coin-tossing experiments. After a run of, say, 17 heads in coin-tossing, tail will become more probable, not because of any bias



in the coin or flaw in the experimental conditions but because, according to Marbe, we have to endow the "laws of large numbers" with something like memory. The hypothesis has been recently revived by the psychiatrist Eisenbud in connection with the "card-guessing" experiments of parapsychology carried out by J. B. Rhine and his colleagues at the Duke University and by S. G. Soal of the London University. A not far-fetched and, I hope, not uninteresting parallel may help us here. Every educated layman knows that the transcendental numbers  $\pi$  (ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter) and  $e$  (the base of the Napierian system of logarithms), when expanded, give never-ending sequences of decimals. There are no logical grounds for supposing that the expanded decimals will have the properties of random sampling digits. Actually it turns out that the frequencies of the occurrences of the digits, 0, 1, . . . . ., 9, among the first 800 decimals of  $\pi$  and  $e$  are very much like what we should obtain by 800 independent trials with random digits.<sup>1</sup> Would an analogue of Marbe's hypothesis apply to the decimal expansions of  $\pi$  and  $e$  which are not "natural events" at all and cannot plausibly be endowed with anything remotely like "memory"? An axiomatic approach to probability would avoid unnecessary complications and dispense with adventitious aids. Von Wright has suggested that the "possibility", the "frequency" and the "belief" theories of probability may be viewed as so many *interpretations* of the axiomatics of probability just as arithmetical Euclidean geometry and physical Euclidean geometry may be regarded as two *interpretations* of an axiomatically conceived Euclidean geometry. A "statistical decision" problem involves an unknown element of a

1. The probability that, in  $n$  multinomial trials (where each trial can have one of several possible outcomes and not one of two as in Bernoulli trials),  $E_1$  occurs  $K_1$  times,  $E_2$  occurs  $K_2$  times, etc., is found from the multinomial distribution

$$\frac{n!}{K_1! K_2! \dots K_r!} p_1^{K_1} p_2^{K_2} p_3^{K_3} \dots p_r^{K_r}$$

where the  $K$ 's are arbitrary non-negative integers such that  $K_1 + K_2 + \dots + K_r = n$ . In the problem under consideration (the distribution of 800 random digits),  $r = 10$ ;  $n = 800$ ; and  $p_1 = \dots = p_{10} = \frac{1}{10}$ . The frequencies of the occurrences of the digits, 0, 1, . . . . ., 9, in the expansions of  $\pi$  and  $e$  to 800 decimal places, are, respectively,

74, 92, 83, 79, 80, 73, 77, 75, 76, 91  
and 74, 73, 83, 86, 79, 67, 78, 82, 84, 94.

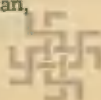
A modern calculating machine can, in about seventy hours, compute  $\pi$  to 2035 decimals.



class  $\Omega$  of distribution-functions (e.g. finite-parameter family of distributions) which is a subset of the class of all possible distribution-functions. The objection that it is not legitimate to apply an abstractly conceived model (for instance, one conceived in terms of Borel fields) to experience loses much of its force when it is realized that almost all scientific laws are strictly valid only for idealized phenomena and that no "verification" of a hypothesis is ever absolute. All that we can hope to do, whether in physics or in parapsychology, is to show that a set of observations is compatible with a hypothesis within the limits of error to which the observations are subject. P. W. Bridgman's reluctance to accept the startling results of experimental parapsychology on the ground that they commit us too heavily to probability considerations is difficult to understand in the epistemological context of modern quantum physics. Spencer Brown's claim that applied probability theory breaks down in parapsychology is as sterile as Marbe's claim that successive Bernoulli trials, even under ideal conditions, are non-independent.<sup>2</sup>

An epistemology enquiring into the structuralist presuppositions of human thought must pay some attention to the possible formal identities and similarities between intrinsically different levels of experience within the framework of a "General System Theory" of the sort propounded by Bertalanffy and others. One imagines that "physical distance" is intrinsically different from the "social distance" between two selected samples of human populations. Yet "isomorphisms" of a kind can be disentangled. C. R. Rao, by a careful analysis of the presuppositions of the method of "multiple discriminants" used in advanced biometric and sociometric research, has shown that the "Mahalanobis statistic" specifying the "distance" between two populations in terms of multiple variates is essentially analogous to ordinary Euclidean distance defined by a set of oblique axes and, therefore, satisfies the postulates of metrical topology. The factorist, too, in psychology makes assumptions translatable into the language of the "metrizability" of spaces in topology. The distinguished psychologist, Sir Cyril Burt, has dwelt on a possible similarity between advanced physics and advanced psychology in respect of the use

2. For a more technical discussion of the issues, see my article with the title "Statistics, Probability and Occultism" appearing in the 1957 Annual (January) Number of the *Astrological Magazine*, edited by Dr. B. V. Raman, Bangalore 3, South India.





of matrix-algebra. The factorist seeking to generalize Spearman's equations has to do with something like the transformation of one set of co-ordinates into another. A linear transformation can be represented by the array of its coefficients. Burt has suggested that factor analysis is a logical rather than a mathematical device. The operand on which the operators of scientific psychology operate is not the human mind but the set of relations between the mind and its environment. The relational structure of this operand is presumably specified by psychological measurements; but the intrinsic nature of mind, in Burt's opinion, is unknown to science; it may be available only to a kind of introspection. It may be urged that the algebra of matrices is more a useful auxiliary than an indispensable method in quantum mechanics and factor analysis. Nevertheless, the suggestion (which we can extract from Burt) that notational mathematics may sometimes be broader than notional mathematics must be pondered over, especially in relation to current methods of "personality testing." The confident belief voiced by some workers that the methods lay bare the "basic make-up" of human personality must be challenged. In spite of Gauss's strident insistence that mathematics is concerned with notions and not with notations, Laplace held that half the trouble in mathematics is avoided when a good notation has been invented.

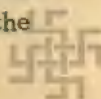
## (3)

I have said that an analysis of the structuralist presuppositions of human thought may well be a prolegomenon to a philosophy of mysticism. In seeking to fathom the mystical experiences of mankind, we must go not only to the pundits and philosophical systematizers like Eckhart, Al-Ghazālī, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Madhva but to those like Teresa, Abū Yazīd, Al-Ḥallāj, Nāmdev, Tukārām, Caitanya, Ramakṛṣṇa, the Vaiṣṇavite aṣṭhvārs and the Śaivite nāyanmārs who expressed themselves in rapturous utterances and not in philosophical disquisitions. It has been suggested that mystical experience involves a sheer transcendence of the personal category. I am afraid that we are on treacherous ground here. The transcendence may well be a transcendence *in* Personality and not a transcendence *of* Personality. The "Supra-personal" may disclose itself to a "Person" who is ever transcending himself and ever finding himself. The "trans-personal" may be more subtly interwoven with the "personal" and the "interpersonal" than philosophers imagine. "Love," said Patmore, "is sure to be something less than human if it is not something more." The "That Thou art" (*Tat tvam asi*) of the Indian tradition is a "mystical

equation", as Otto styled it; it is not the unambiguous affirmation of metaphysical identity, metaphysical difference or even metaphysical identity-in-difference. "Tell me, oh Pāṇḍuraṅg, how Thou and I are distinct?" Tukārām exclaimed. "When salt is dissolved in water, what is it that remains distinct?" For all that, "when monism is expounded without faith and love, the expounder as well as the hearer are troubled and afflicted." "For me there is no satisfaction in the doctrine of monism. Sweet is the service of Thy feet!"

The fear of a covert pantheism has led a metaphysician like Jacques Maritain to deny any "substantial contact" (*contact entitatif*) between the creature and its creator even in mystical transport. The fear is unfounded. Words like "pantheism", "theopantism", "panentheism", when they are imported into studies of mysticism, are little more than heavy-handed attempts to deal with an elusive experience. Roma Chaudhury, in a comparative study of Śūfism and the Vedānta, noticed that, apart from "transcendence", "immanence" and "transcendence *cum* immanence", we have to reckon with a "*neither transcendence nor immanence*" which alone can do justice to the subtle teaching of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī and Al-Ghazālī. I should like to point out that even "transcendence" and "immanence", on a mystic's lips, are not quite what they sound. The contraries are often piled up brusquely. Jīlī's "We are the spirit of *one* though we dwell by turns in two bodies" is more than balanced by Ḥallāj's "We are *two* spirits dwelling in one body." (*Italics mine*) In all mystical teaching, no two beings are so alike as God and the Soul and yet so different.

"Likeness to God" (*Homoiōsis tō theo*) is then not assimilable to one of the familiar categories. The *fanā* of the Śūfī tradition is perhaps untranslatable; "passing-away", *entwerden*, are lame substitutes; but the word is seldom a mere negative; its complement is the positive *baqā*, the state in which the soul partakes of Divinity. R. A. Nicholson has remarked that even the "burnt moth" is used by Ḥallāj as a symbol of the sublimated personality of the saint. Al-Ghazālī journeying first to his Lord and then *in* his Lord may remind us of Ruysbroeck with his intent to navigate the Divine Deep: *in vastissimum Divinitatis pelagus navigare*. The Chinese Tao is the ineffable world-ground; yet it is said to "nourish, rule all things." The *satori* or enlightenment of Zen is usually explained in negatives; but, as Suzuki has told us, it is essentially a positive attitude. Zen is *Suchness*: a grand affirmation. The "convergence" (if I may so call it) of the





higher mystical experiences of mankind in an awareness which Père Picard has described as at once "evident and vague" (*une connaissance claire-confuse*) and E. I. Watkin as "strong and confused" (*forte et confuse*) sets one of the most important problems for metaphysics. We cannot explain away the concordance of testimony by invoking the "subconscious." There are obvious limits to the usefulness of that maid-of-all-work. We have to account for the surpassing richness and fulness of the lives of great mystics. The sceptic Barbusse saw a fatal obstacle to unbelief in the redemptive suffering of which mystics were capable: "The suffering, it's even depth." (*La souffrance, c'est la profondeur même*).

Mystics in all climes and at all times have displayed a singular preference for the language of paradox. There are metaphysicians who count it a weakness rather than strength in a philosophy that its ultimate truth is a paradox. I have urged more than once that we cannot so lightly pronounce on the issues without first undertaking a thorough investigation of the consistency and completeness of the "definite languages." I shall drop but a few suggestions here. The proposition that Russell's class is a member of itself cannot be treated as being either "true" or "false" if the unrestricted validity of the law of excluded middle (*tertium non datur*) is denied. Special forms of three-valued logic set up with a great deal of care may avoid alternative forms of Russell's paradox, and perhaps the Cantor and the Burali-Forti paradoxes as well, though at the cost of admitting a value which is neither "truth" nor "falsity." It may be objected that a non-classical theory of negation will not resolve Curry's paradox. Curry showed that, on the naïve view of classes (i.e.  $x$  belongs to the class of all  $F$ 's if and only if  $x$  is an  $F$ ) any arbitrary proposition can be derived by *modus ponens*. Following F. B. Fitch and others, however, we may question the unconditional validity of the *modus ponens*. We are much less sure of the ultimate foundations of logic and mathematics today than we were two or three decades ago. It may be doubted whether large and significant parts of modern topology can be derived without an "axiom of choice" or at least some form of it of restricted cardinality. It may, again, be doubted whether a general theory of Lebesgue measure can be fashioned without a "denumerable axiom of choice." If the content of mystical experience is not amenable to a classical theory of entailment, negation and exclusion, there are no grounds for supposing that the content can be satisfactorily rendered by one of our ordinary "definite languages." Newman, in a famous essay on literature, asked:

"Is the tongue of the Hottentot or Esquimaux to be made the measure of the genius of Plato, Pindar, Tacitus, Dante, Cervantes?" I must ask whether a logic nourished on one of the ordinary "definite languages" is to be made the measure of the mystical insight of a St. John of the Cross, a St. Teresa, a Maulāna Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī, a Master Tokusan and a Sri Rāmakṛṣṇa. The One, Plotinus testified, is seen "in presence which is better than science" (*kata parousian epistēmēs kreittona*). "If anyone sees God and understands what he sees," Dionysius pronounced, "he has not seen God at all."

I have argued elsewhere that there is a curious and often unsuspected affinity between the dialectic of the mystic and the dialectic of Kierkegaard, the "Father" of modern "existentialist" philosophy. Kierkegaard accepted the validity of the "objectively oriented" method of science within limits; he only challenged its capacity to exhaust the person-to-person relationships. Not only must we take account of the knower who reads the instruments, records the observations, and "affirms" the theory (that would be a commonplace of scientific pragmatics); we have to reckon with the being who asks questions about the meaning of his life and his immortality. The Inward Man is the dwelling-place of truth in this sense: *in interiore homine habitat veritas*. Man is not only *Homo Faber*, the maker of tools and artifices; he is *Homo interior*. Socrates, the Master of Irony as Kierkegaard represents him, is unassimilable to Hegel's systematic philosophic thought, *das reine Denken*, because his supreme concern is for the manner in which his listeners are modified by truth in their "essential" and personal mode of being. That "essential truth" depends not on *what* is said but *how* it is said may be seen in the great mystical traditions. The person who knocked at Abū Yazīd's cell elicited the answer from the saint: "I have been seeking Abū Yazīd for a long time, but I have not found him." "Is Bāyazīd here?" drew from the Saint: "Is anyone here except God?" When Jetsūn Milarepa, Tibet's Great Guru, was asked by a pundit (*geshé*) to expound a book, he responded:

"Accustomed long to application of each new experience to mine own spiritual growth,

I have forgotten all creeds and dogmas"

When Tokusan (Têh-Shan) attained enlightenment, he took out his commentary on the Diamond Sutra and set fire to it. A Zen Master describes the Kō-an exercise as a "great consuming fire;



it burns up every insect of idle speculation that approaches it." In much Jewish mysticism, the mystics are "Bearers of the Secret" (*Ba'ale ha-Sod*), "Students of Profound Knowledge" (*Chachme ha-Tushiah*), "Knowers of the Measures" (*Yod'e Middin*), "Men of Action" (*Anshe maaseh*). Kierkegaard both affirmed and denied that God is the "middle term" in human relations. God is not a phenomenon outside human consciousness, the object of metaphysical contemplation; he is Subject and not Object. God is radically involved in all attempts to change personal relations. He is the true Love binding human beings. The "Moslem Teresa", Rābī'a, had a saying: "First the Neighbour, then the house." The joy of gnosis is the pre-condition of living intercommunication. Al-Ghazālī fashioned a similar saying: "First the Companion, then the road." Love, Rūmī says, is the "astrolabe of heavenly mysteries."

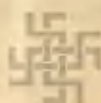
Let me close by reiterating a view to which I have given expression. The poetry of Oriental mysticism deserves to be studied from a metaphysical angle. The neo-Kantian Lange regarded metaphysics as "a justified form of poetry." Might one claim that some poetry at least is a justified form of metaphysics? In the terminology which must be familiar to students of mysticism, while the *animus* operates in the field of clear and abstract thinking, the *anima* functions in a deeper and richer, if seemingly obscurer field of awareness. Anḍāl and Māṇikkavācagar were consummate mystic poets of South India; *Tiruppāvai* and *Tiruvembāvai* have startlingly similar and far-reaching themes. Evans-Wentz describes Tibet's Great Guru, Milarepa, as a "Yogin-Poet." Suzuki insists that poetry is an essential vehicle of Zen. Even if we discount the laboured prettiness and the "fine writing" (*Kalambāzī*) of the later Persian poets, there can be little doubt that a great deal of the poetry is suffused with mysticism. The French critic who dismissed Rūmī with the remark, "He moralizes everything" (*Il moralise tout*), missed the "existential" import of the *Mathnawī*. Both in the *Mathnawī* and in the *Dīwānī Shamsi Tabriz* occurs the exquisite image of the reed-flute (*nay*): the symbol of the soul's separation from God. The flute laments its separation from the reed-bed. Apart from the fact that most of *Tao Tê Ching* is rhyme, the method of exposition adopted in it is that of mystic poetry. It is with the aid of a paradox (*fan yen*) that the Taoist Master characterizes the process of mystic conversion: "Which of you can assume such murkiness as to become in the end still



and clear?" I would say that the Kierkegaardian "leap" is all there is some long-familiar cadences of the *Upaniṣads*:

From the unreal lead me to the real;  
From darkness lead me to light;  
From death lead me to deathlessness.

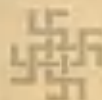
I am not recommending a syncretistic metaphysics in which the individuality of each religion will be lost. I am contemplating a sharing of spiritual experiences, a co-operation in the great moral tasks of humanity, which may enable religions to grow out of the religions of today. If we cannot all be mystics and saints, we can be "lovers" of mystics and saints, as Ghazālī put it. Neither logic nor metaphysics can have a bounded horizon. In both alike, we must look forward to new hinterlands, purer airs and brighter skies,





## Part II

### SYMPOSIA



## Symposium I

### Does Indian Philosophy Need Re-Orientation ?

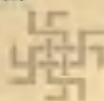
I

by

G. R. MALKANI, *Amalner*

Before we can answer this question, we must know something about the *objective* and the *method* of Indian Philosophy. By Indian Philosophy we do not mean here all the different traditional systems which fall under that name. We mean the highest and the best form of thought which fulfils the "idea of philosophy" as understood in India. There is such a thing as levels of thought, and the progressive realisation of the highest philosophical ideal. Vedanta alone in some form or other will meet the requirements of our definition. It is the only form of philosophy that lives in the thought and in the lives of most Indians, and is a perpetual inspiration to them from age to age. The objective of Indian Philosophy or of Vedanta cannot be better indicated than by setting it against the objective of what is called Western Philosophy. Here again, we need not enter into the question whether Western philosophy has any single objective. The best thing we can do is to take into consideration the best products of constructive metaphysical thinking in the West, and disregard all negative, sceptical and positivistic tendencies. The undoubted tendency of western philosophy as thus understood is certainly in the direction of knowing the truth in a purely rational way. Science does this to a certain extent. Science is rational knowledge of Nature. Philosophy may be said to be the extension of this interest to a different and a wider field. Facts of cognition, facts of volition and facts of feeling have got to be explained and understood. There must be a theory of truth, a theory of morals, a theory of aesthetic enjoyment and a theory of religious experience. More than that, there must be a whole and integrated view of reality as such or a world-view.

Facts of experience, whether cognitive, volitional, etc., cannot be denied. They are common to all men. But their interpretation or explanation in terms of intellectual categories is not com-





mon. Different philosophers have different theories. This difference is due to the method employed by them. It is the method of hypothesis or the method of theoretical construction. It is the same method as that of science. But there is a difference in the *truth-value* of their respective constructions.

Scientific truth can be checked by facts or verified. The field of facts here is almost indefinite, and so new facts can always be found to confirm or to contradict the theory. Philosophical truth cannot be verified; for its facts are subjective experiences, and when these are interpreted in a certain way, no facts are left over to contradict the interpretation. Facts can never therefore contradict the theory. Or, in other words, divergent philosophical theories can equally well thrive on the same facts. No philosopher can really produce an argument which can refute, another philosopher with a different argument, to the latter's satisfaction. Logical refutation thus becomes impossible in the field of philosophical theorisation. All that one philosopher can do is to refute another philosopher's argument from within, i.e., to show its inherent contradiction. Or what is the same thing, the logic accepted by the opponent is shown as contradicting him. He is refuted so to say from his own mouth. But this fault-finding business can be a reciprocal affair, a two-way traffic. No theory can be logically perfect; and so criticism is a form of argument of almost universal application in philosophy. Literal and ultimate truth is attainable in these circumstances. Philosophical truth becomes just a way of looking at things by a particular philosopher. There is no question of unanimity and no question of a universal logic that can apply to philosophical argument in any but a very formal sense. Substantive truth remains unaffected by this formal logic, and it can be as varied as there are philosophers with a point of view.

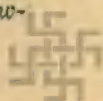
Another important distinction between science and western philosophy is that scientific truth has well-defined value for life. It serves a purpose. Scientific knowledge in different fields can be used to increase the well-being of the individual. Philosophical knowledge as understood in the west serves no such known purpose. The intricate systems of concepts about the nature of ultimate reality may give a sort of intellectual satisfaction. But it is more like the satisfaction which one derives from the contemplation of an aesthetic object than satisfaction in objective truth that is independent of the thinker. Or what is the same thing, philosophic truth goes its own way, satisfying a purely intellectual urge, and the rest of life goes its own way unaffected by the truth. There is no intimate relation between the two. If anything does

affect life, it is not the theoretical adumbrations of a logic-ridden mind, but the volitional and affective attitude to reality inspired by an extra-logical source, such as the word of the scripture or just natural bias. Western philosophy fails to prove its value for life. It has value only for a restricted circle of people who are interested in the theoretical game of constructing comprehensive systems of concepts to satisfy a personal desire.

The method of reason adopted by western philosophy is eminently successful in science, but not in philosophy. Here all facts can be questioned. They are in the melting-pot. If the fact confronts you, you can still disbelieve it. If there is the least room for doubt or uncertainty, our reason is bound to exploit it and even challenge the veracity of our senses. Reason in philosophy sees the evidence of distortion almost everywhere, in all that we know. It is at its best when it is thoroughly critical and criticises every claim to truth or appearance of truth. But can it give any positive knowledge? It gives positive knowledge, only when it lapses from its truly critical role and becomes dogmatic. It then constructs world-views under the inspiration of some hidden bias. All these world-views have one merit. They cannot be proved false by reference to facts. The philosopher has his own way with facts. These can be made to conform to the interpretation put upon them. But for that very reason, the truth of any particular world-view is open to question. It is a mere product of the imagination. Imagination has a legitimate place in science, it has none in philosophy. Philosophical truth must draw nothing from imagination. But then how can reason, in philosophy, function constructively without imagination?

We have so far examined the objective and the method of philosophy in the west. Indian Philosophy differs in both these respects. Knowledge in Indian Philosophy is not sought for its own sake or for a certain intellectual satisfaction. It is only a means to an end. The end of all human activity is conceived in a forth-right manner as freedom from all pain, bondage and limitation and as the highest form of joyful being. Knowledge is no exception to this goal. In fact, it is taken to be the most efficacious means, if not the only means, to that goal. Indian Philosophy is honestly pragmatic. But it is pragmatic in the highest sense of that term. It is interested in philosophic truth only as a means to the summum bonum of life.

This intimate relation between life and truth can only be realized if truth is taken in its best sense. It must be *direct know-*





ledge of reality, which derives nothing from sense or from imagination, and which is not therefore open to cancellation. Such knowledge alone realizes the ideal of knowledge. It is commonly called knowledge by *intuition*. Intuitions are of various kinds. There is such a thing as poetic intuition. It is largely imagination activated by intense feeling. The scientist also has his intuitions. He is said directly to perceive certain connections of things or certain truths of nature which explain a wide range of facts. But these truths, hypothetical in character, are still products of imagination, although they have reference to objective reality. Similarly, literary men, religious men, even practical men,—all have their own intuitions in their own respective fields. It is a form of knowledge which arrives at a conclusion through a very rapid and condensed process of reasoning, or alternatively it is just imagination which dispenses with reasoning altogether and puts feeling in its place. Mystical visions may be said to be intuitions in the latter sense. In none of these cases, is intuition a direct form of awareness of a self-existing reality. This direct awareness alone has real theoretical value. It is not a mysterious faculty. A mysterious faculty yet undeveloped in the ordinary man has no philosophical value. Our common intellect alone has this value. It is the only genuine organ of knowledge. When the intellect contacts reality directly, and without the mediation of the senses and conceptual schemes, it can be said to have an intuition of reality. Such knowledge is naturally characterised as “intellectual intuition”. The intellect here does not determine reality, but it is rather determined by it. Reality owes nothing to the intellect, while the intellect owes everything to reality. It is knowledge *as determined by reality* (*vastu-tantra*). The intellect is enlightened and satisfied; but it cannot express its knowledge in propositional form, which involves concepts. This knowledge is therefore literally inexpressible; and when it is expressed, as it must be for communication, the expression must be understood symbolically to point to a reality beyond the concepts.

This direct revelation of reality to the intellect is not possible with regard to the physical and the sensible world. Our knowledge of the latter is necessarily mediated. We are separated from things in themselves by the relativity of the sensuous and categorised content of knowledge. The reality cannot be sensuous. It must be essentially non-sensuous and metaphysical. If it is possible to show that there is metaphysical reality which is at the same time *intelligent* by its very nature so that it can directly reveal itself to the intellect, it will be possible to realize the ideal

of direct and intuitive knowledge we are in search of. The intellect will not then be called upon to use any of its categories for knowledge, nor the senses for establishing a dubious sort of direct contact with reality. The self is such a metaphysical reality. This reality is the same as the reality behind the sensuous screen.

Whatever may be thought of this solution, Indian Philosophy does tackle the problem of an intellectual intuition of reality in the sense indicated above. Its success or failure to give a completely satisfactory solution of it will decide the success or failure of its claim to a higher kind of knowledge. We cannot enter into the merits of the solution here. We shall merely answer a subsidiary question which is quite relevant. If there is a reality which is by its very nature self-revealing to the intellect, it would always be known, and known for what it is. There would then be no ignorance of it. How can we come to know what is always and timelessly known? Knowledge presupposes ignorance. We must be ignorant before we can know. There must therefore not only be a reality that is self-revealing to the intellect, but the intellect must also in some sense be ignorant of it. How is this possible?

We now contend that it is quite possible that reality may be known and yet not *recognised* for what it is, and that therefore it is both known and unknown. It is known in one sense, and not known in another sense. It is known timelessly and without the intervention of the intellect; but it is not known in an intellectual intuition, which arises only as a result of a valid method of knowledge. An example will make this clear. Ten men crossed a river, and then each in turn counted the others in order to make sure that all the ten were safe. Nobody counted himself. Certainly, every one of them knew himself with absolute certainty, and yet he required outside aid to remove his ignorance about the tenth in that particular situation. So his knowledge of himself was quite compatible with his ignorance of himself. In the same way, it is possible to know metaphysical reality and yet be ignorant of it. In the circumstances, what is needed is a verbal direction from one who is free from ignorance. The revealed word or *śruti* performs this limited function in Indian Philosophy. It does not make known what is absolutely unknown before. It merely produces recognition of what is always cognised in another and non-intellectual sense. *Śruti* is thus accepted as a method of revealing reality and not as a dogmatic assertion requiring proof. It is therefore rightly called *śabdapramāṇa* or the verbal method





of knowledge. The word merely removes our ignorance of a thing which is present to us, and produces recognition. It does not require us to draw upon imagination or upon our credulity or even the spiritual quality of faith. This then is the tradition of Indian Philosophy—to obtain a direct knowledge of reality which is not open to cancellation, and which is therefore absolutely certain. This knowledge is achieved with the aid of the revealed word or *śruti*.

The goal of Indian Philosophy is absolute freedom and absolute joy. The way to it is direct knowledge of reality as it is in itself. The method of this knowledge is the revealed word supported by reason. And lastly, the qualification for this knowledge comes from certain moral and spiritual qualities of life which purify the mind, improve its intuitive capacity, and thus make it fit for the great purpose in hand. *Adhikara* or qualification is an important prerequisite for knowledge. Indian Philosophy is thus an *organic whole*. The philosopher must have the right qualifications, a right method and a right goal. If any of these things is missing, philosophical truth itself would be found to be missing. Western Philosophy is different from Indian Philosophy in all these respects. It does not postulate any direct connection between philosophical truth and the highest good of life called the *summum bonum*. It does not seek, and does not even consider it possible to have, a direct and intuitive knowledge of ultimate metaphysical reality. It does not accept any method of knowledge outside reason, and would certainly consider all verbal testimony as wholly dogmatic and not deserving of the serious attention of a philosopher. It finds no relation between moral and spiritual qualities and the possibility of philosophical knowledge. Natural intelligence is supposed to be quite competent to know all the truth that it is open to human beings to know. The goal is different, the method is different,—and the results are bound to be different.

Can any-one now tell us what is wrong with Indian Philosophy or what improvement we can introduce in it? Is there anything in western philosophy or in any other form of philosophising known to the intellectual world which we can usefully copy and which can make the pursuit of philosophical truth more fruitful for us or more profitable in the end? We can of course copy the so-called rational method of western philosophy which is supposed to give it a rich content and the appearance of progress. We forget that Eternal Truth is not a progressive affair, and that there is a right method of approach to it and also a wrong method.

## DOES INDIAN PHILOSOPHY NEED RE-ORIENTATION? 77

It is only when we adopt the latter that there is an endless variety of philosophical conclusions. Every philosopher then becomes a law unto himself. He sees truth with his narrow, biassed and uninstructed mind. The mere human seeks to fathom the depths of the divine. Is this possible without a higher or divine guidance? That cannot be said of Indian Philosophy which is rooted in the Eternal Word and a line of seers and mystics who have testified to the Word in their own lives.

The only thing wrong with the Indian Philosophy is that Indians themselves have failed it. They have imbibed a taste for an exotic philosophical plant. The very ideal of Absolute Truth, Absolute Freedom and Absolute Joy fails to evoke any response from their hearts. They consider such an ideal as being far beyond their powers, and in fact as mythical. Knowledge of Mathematics and science and an empirical way of thinking have acquired a respectability among the intelligent and educated Indians of the present day that does them little credit as representative Indian Philosophers. They have accordingly ceased to be creative and ceased to keep up the tradition of Indian Philosophy. Their failure in this respect is unfortunately reflected upon Indian philosophy itself, which appears to many Europeans and some Indians themselves as no real philosophy at all, but a form of theology, or at best what is called an "escapist-philosophy." Nothing can be farther from the truth for a discerning mind. These are outside and uninformed criticisms. Indian philosophy seeks truth in the best *theoretic* sense, which can stand all the criticism of reason that is not merely perverse. Further, this truth is invested with its proper value, which is the freedom of the spirit of man in the highest sense. Truth alone can make us free; and that truth cannot be the lower truth of science, but the higher truth pertaining to things of the spirit sought by philosophy.

The Indian philosopher has need to return to his own tradition. He has no need to change that tradition or to reorientate Indian philosophy to exotic systems of thought. We do not mean to say that western philosophy should not be studied by us or that it should be rejected out of hand as of no value what-soever. That will not be philosophical common sense. It will be against the spirit of the times. European philosophy has had a great liberalising effect in the realm of thought. The very freedom of thought which it encourages has a cultural value of its own. But culture is one thing, and strict philosophic truth is another. What we contend is that western philosophy does not help us in finding the



latter. It has therefore only a secondary value for us. We can use our knowledge of this philosophy to present Indian philosophical truths in a language which a wider circle of readers all over the world can understand. If we ourselves become conscious of the power of the ancient Indian Thought to satisfy fully the longing for Absolute Truth of a mind that sincerely seeks it, we can achieve a revolution in the present-day philosophical thinking dominated by a narrow empirical interest. There is no reason whatsoever for any Indian philosopher to bewail the unprogressive character of Indian philosophy. It is a great pity that Indians themselves lack confidence in their own philosophic mission and seem to be ever ready to accommodate uninformed foreign critics and to be apologetic about certain aspects of Indian thought that do not commend themselves to persons of a different philosophical back-ground and a different tradition. We need a good grounding in our great philosophic heritage, if we are to guard ourselves against cheap philosophical labels and empty logical subtleties that have achieved respectability in our secular age.

My conclusion is that Indian Philosophy does not stand in need of any re-orientation. It stands in need only of a fair and intelligent presentation. What it needs most is to be saved from the neglect and the misunderstanding of Indians themselves. When this is done, it will become a force in the world of thought before which no false philosophical gods can stand. To say that Absolute Truth is unattainable is one such god. Indian Philosophy in its best form shows the way to this truth. The question we need ask ourselves before we turn to other philosophical quarters is, have we qualified for this way? Have we tried it and found it wanting? It is not Indian Philosophy that needs re-orientation but the false philosophical values that we have imbibed through our contact with western culture.



## Does Indian Philosophy Need Re-Orientation ?

II

by

J. N. CHUBB

*Elphinstone College, Bombay*

"All we do or create must be consistent with the abiding spirit of India, but framed to fit into a greater harmonised rhythm and plastic to the call of a more luminous future. . . . There cannot be a healthy and victorious survival if we make of the past a fetish instead of an inspiring impulse."

—Sri Aurobindo, *Foundations of Indian Culture*, pp. 42-3.

This is perhaps the most opportune time for Indian Philosophy to take stock of itself and to determine the lines of its future development in the light of its still unexplored potentialities. In this country we are entering on a period of constructive growth in all spheres of life, and it would be surprising if Philosophy alone, which in the past has always been one of the major occupations of Indian mind, should rest content with what it has achieved and continue to languish in the stagnation that was the consequence of centuries of political subjection. At the least we must expect Philosophy in India to keep in step with the other resurgent forces of our national life and along with them take a great stride forward for the expression and release of the creative spirit and genius that is the soul of this great nation.

Prof. Malkani appears to be satisfied with our philosophical achievements in the past and does not see "what improvement we can introduce in it." In his paper he has, it seems, taken the word reorientation to mean the forsaking of established tradition and the pursuit of "exotic systems of thought." This would not be a process of reorientation, but a violent uprooting, which would be as senseless as it is impossible. Reorientation implies a change, but not any kind of change, least of all one which betrays whimsicality of mind and infirmity of purpose. A philosophical temper for which the whole essence of Philosophy lies in its being a gateway or at least a prelude to the Eternal Vision (Darsana) is not driven by



ennui or frustration to evolve new and ephemeral fashions in thought by the exercise of mere ingenuity. For such a temper, Philosophy is not a past-time, or an intellectual game or even the main preoccupation of the mind in its search for Truth. Philosophy is the ante-chamber of Wisdom, perennial, not in its own right, but as the medium which reflects darkly the bright visage of Eternal Truth to be seized by Philosophy overleaping itself. Philosophy is thus simultaneously perennial, because its fixed aim is the eternal, and transient because the spirit behind it is not satisfied with a mere conceptual delineation of Truth, but presses on till it finds itself in that to which Philosophy can only distantly point.

I agree with Prof. Malkani in so far as he rejects any development in or transformation of Philosophy which takes away from it its central role of turning men's minds and hearts towards the Eternal, but reorientation is I think possible without implying loss of faith in ourselves or a radical departure from the traditional outlook and approach. It is indisputable that 'Eternal Truth is not a progressive affair', and if Philosophy were identical with Eternal Truth, the present symposium would perhaps not have taken place; but just as "he who drives fat oxen need not himself be fat" the activity which does no more than reflect the Image of the Immutable need not itself be impervious to change. There may be a progressive revelation or clarification in conceptual terms of that which is in itself complete, as well as a progressive self-awareness on the part of the instrument used for making this clarification. True, that to emphasise and define with ever increasing clarity a central Truth which one has already perceived is not itself a process of reorientation, but there is a possibility that in the endeavour at greater self-awareness and awareness of Truth there may arise a marked shift in emphasis; new tasks may be presented and new vistas promising greater harmonies open up to the inquiring mind. In such a case Philosophy must take its bearing afresh, re-define itself and grow perceptibly in stature and importance while yet retaining its rich heritage and remaining loyal to the past from which it makes this significant departure towards "a more luminous future."

Let me indicate what I consider to be the new directions in which Indian Philosophy may henceforth move with the aim of achieving a more enlarged vision and a greater self-fulfilment.

In the first place it is necessary for Indian Philosophy to achieve a critical awareness of itself, its basic assumptions or pos-

tulates, its methods of approach and its place *qua* Philosophy or intellectual enquiry in man's total orientation towards the Supreme. This means that our Philosophy must become self-conscious as intensely as hitherto it has been conscious of its object. It is my opinion that in philosophy, as distinguished from the natural sciences, the primary subject matter of thought is the activity of thinking itself. Though it is possible to talk and think of the subject matter of Philosophy without reference to our thought about it, such thinking is the result of an abstraction and is thus incompletely philosophical. The reason for this is that while all thinking is critical, philosophical thinking is critical in a special sense. It cannot be fully critical unless it is also critical of itself. In reflecting on its object philosophical thought is at best informative; it is only when it reflects on its object in the act of reflecting on itself that it offers proof of its conclusions and so becomes Philosophy in the fullest sense of the word. To put this differently, Ontology is philosophical information and not demonstration unless it becomes part of a wider discipline which may be called Epistemology, if this term understood to mean Philosophy becoming conscious or critical of itself. Critical Philosophy is not, as Kant perhaps thought, a prelude to Constructive Philosophy, but inclusive of it. Ontology must arise from and complete itself in Epistemology.

Now I think it will be admitted that in Indian Philosophy, as in Western Philosophy, the emphasis is mainly on Ontology. There are no doubt elaborate theories of knowledge, but these deal largely with our knowledge of the external world, and Epistemology, in the sense of a critical self-awareness on the part of Philosophy receives only a cursory treatment. There is, for instance, the well-established tradition in Indian thought that in our search for Truth *śravaṇa* (the hearing of Truth) necessarily precedes *manana* (reflection on Truth) and that *Śruti* (scripture) is our sole *pramāṇa* or means of knowing the existence of Brahman or the Infinite. These presuppositions, to my mind, are or should be accepted as an inalienable part of all those systems of Philosophy both in the East and the West which in contrast with the secular and, in a narrower sense, rationalistic systems which largely dominate European thought may be described as spiritual philosophies or philosophies of Salvation.

But these presuppositions must now become the focus of a fresh inquiry and be fully discussed and justified. This shift in emphasis requires that we should now approach all philosophical





problems afresh by concentrating our attention on the Concept of Philosophy. Pioneer work in this field has already been done by that great Master of Philosophy Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya, but a great deal yet remains to be done. In this connection I may mention that Catholic philosophers who belong to the same tradition of spiritual Philosophy are recognising the importance of such a reorientation in increasing measure in recent times,<sup>1</sup> though it seems to me that their naïve belief which they share with Protestant thinkers in the monopolistic character of their faith as expressed in the view that Christianity is the intended Religion of all mankind may prevent them from realising that all Metaphysics has its origin in Revelation and that the so-called *lumen naturale* cannot formulate "proofs" for the existence of God, unless it is first illumined by the higher light of faith.<sup>2</sup>

The dogmatic error of Christianity appears in the first instance to have been the result of an immaturity in matters of Religion and a consequent inability to understand the Avatāric utterances of Christ in their true perspective. This error was no doubt confirmed by the flattering belief that those to whom the Christian Revelation was given were "God's Chosen people". The Avatāric role assumed by Sri Krishna in the Gita has not betrayed the Hindus into a similar narrowmindedness and bigotry because of their greater maturity and freedom from self-delusion. The Christian assumption of superiority and self-righteousness is perhaps the most tragic error in the history of Religion. It has prevented in the past and, with rare exceptions, still prevents Christian thinkers from co-operating with non-Christians in the great common endeavour to establish the supremacy of spiritual values and the true *philosophia perennis* as distinguished from the very imperfect version of it which we find in the systems of those philosophers who prefer to draw their inspiration from the Greeks rather than from the word of God.

The second task which to my mind awaits Indian Philosophy arises out of the tremendous challenge posed by Sri Aurobindo's Concept of the Supermind or Truth-consciousness with its immeasurable consequences for the transformation of earth-nature and human nature, not only to Indian thought but to the thought and

1. I may mention one great little book, *Faith seeks Understanding* by J. Coventry S.J. which has helped me greatly in formulating my own views.

2. This is one of the main theses of my recent articles published in the *Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress*.

conscience of all mankind. The manifestation of the Supramental Will on earth breaking through the resistance and inertia of Matter and the Inconscient and coming as the grand finale of the laborious evolutionary ascent of Nature is itself "the luminous future" towards which, according to Sri Aurobindo, our attention must now be turned. In the *Life Divine* there is already, in the language and technique of Philosophy, a comprehensive elaboration of the concept of the Supermind, so that in a sense it is true that a fundamental reorientation has already taken place through an extension not only of Indian Philosophy but of the very bounds of human thought. But when we talk of the reorientation of Philosophy it is not enough to point to the work of a solitary genius, however thorough the manner of its accomplishment. Gathering up the total heritage of the past, Sri Aurobindo has taken a giant stride forward in his discovery of that dynamic creative principle in which alone is the final synthesis of all truths and experiences. The future must witness the closing of this great gap between the old and the new by the dual process of expansion and assimilation. Indian Philosophy must grow in stature and raise its head higher so that it might, with becoming grace wear the Sovereign's crown that one man's labour has prepared for it.

I shall now discuss the two suggested lines along which the reorientation of our philosophy may take place.

There is first the need for Indian philosophy to become deeply aware of itself. This will involve defining itself in relation to Western philosophy, not so much with respect to their respective conclusions about Reality, as with reference to the very meaning of Philosophy and the value of its discipline in the life of man and his orientation towards the Ultimate.

We may start with the question, frequently asked, but rarely adequately discussed, Is Indian philosophy philosophy at all? Precisely the same question may be and has been asked concerning Scholastic philosophy. It is true that Western historians of philosophy may have rationalized their ignorance of Indian philosophy and their incompetence to deal with it by answering the question in the negative. (Cf. Stace's remarks in his 'A Critical History of Greek Philosophy') There may, however, be more plausible reasons for reaching the same conclusion, though, I think, they are all based on an insufficient analysis. Indian philosophy is philosophy in the sense in which Western philosophy is, but it is much more. It is on a higher level because it is fully and explicitly axiological,



while Western philosophy is mainly scientific. For the former Reality is the supreme *purusārtha*, our ultimate fulfilment and salvation; for the latter Reality is no more than an object of thought, a hypostatized concept, with which we cannot have any existential relationship. Without recognizing this distinction of levels, to point out the similarities and differences in their conclusions does not make for a very illuminating comparative study. A statement by an Indian philosopher may correspond verbally with a statement made by a Western philosopher, but its inner significance may be very different. To the former it would have no meaning except in the context of *Sadhana* and the possibility of its direct verification, to the latter it would be only a scientific, or as the logical positivists would say, a pseudo-scientific statement. A wholly new effort at presenting Indian thought is now necessary, one which will not obscure basic differences or indulge in glib comparisons.

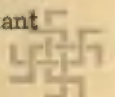
To return to the question whether Indian philosophy is philosophy: the question arises in this way. The term philosophy is identified with an autonomous exercise of the intellect in which no external authority of any sort is admissible. It is the activity of the *lumen naturale* which relies on its own resources and capacities to reveal the truth. The philosophical inquiry, therefore, starts with nothing but the open-minded and unhampered desire to reach valid results guided only by principles and criteria native to the constitution of reason and coerced by nothing except the inescapable drive of its own logic. Now it is customary to contrast philosophy, as so understood, with Theology and to regard the latter as a discipline in which reason is not autonomous but is employed in the service of an authority which is held to be higher than reason. Thus in Theology, reason is within the bounds of revelation and seeks its major premiss in a statement of scripture. It makes what may be called an aesthetic and a mathematical, but not a critical use of reason, i.e., it expounds and arranges the data of revelation and deduces consequences from them, but it does not subject its starting point to a critical scrutiny. Within its self-imposed limits, however, it may be critical, without being philosophical, its exegetical problems raising issues which are mainly logical and linguistic.

This distinction of Philosophy and Theology comes down to us from St. Thomas Aquinas and is guilty of an error of oversimplification which has fixed an impassible gulf between these two

sciences and has obscured the true origin of philosophical reasoning. But to continue the argument: In view of this distinction, Indian philosophy, it is held, must more accurately be regarded as Theology, since it recognizes *Śruti* as the over-riding authority in all matters concerning ultimate Reality. Thus we are told that Indian philosophy is not philosophy in the Western sense of the word, and that the Indian Darsanas, whatever value they may have in themselves, are not the result of a kind of activity which has produced rationalistic systems such as those of Plato, Hegel or Bradley.

The error of simplification in the above distinction between Theology and Philosophy consists in the assumption that recognition of the authority of *Śruti* is necessarily incompatible with the autonomous functioning of reason, or alternately that reason which is autonomous does not in any sense owe its origin to the data of revelation. There is a clear alternative to the Thomistic distinction and which is in full accord with the standpoint of Indian, but not of Christian philosophy. I have developed this distinction in the papers contributed to the Philosophical Congress during the last few years and have presented the thesis as my own standpoint. I think it may now be put forward as the standpoint which Indian philosophy as such must adopt in consonance with its general spirit and as an implication of its unequivocal declaration that Truth has first to be heard and then thought about, and that *Śruti* is our only *prāmāṇa* in establishing the existence of Brahman or the Infinite.

The alternative which is overlooked by Aquinas is that while reasoning in Philosophy is autonomous (in the sense explained) it is not necessarily self-subsistent, i.e., it may not be existentially independent of revelation as Aquinas imagined it to be. We must distinguish here between the premiss of reasoning and the basic datum which makes the metaphysical use of reason at all possible. *Śruti*, according to Indian philosophy, is in the last resort the latter and not the former. If it were taken as a major premiss of reasoning then it would become an authority imposed on reasoning *ab extra* and we would be justified in denying the title of Philosophy to the subsequent reasoning process; but if reasoning is autonomous only in its formal aspect, i.e., as a capacity for organizing into coherent form, and is ontologically wholly dependent on revelation, i.e., owes its root concepts as distinguished from its developed structure to the revealed word, then it will be recognized that Philosophy and Theology are, in an important





sense, one. This union of Philosophy and Theology is constituted by the union of revelation and reasoning in a single process having two distinguishable but inseparable aspects in which the revealed truth is 'freely' elaborated into a coherent system of ideas.

Let me illustrate the distinction between the major premiss and the basic datum of reasoning. Take the proposition "God exists." This becomes the major premiss of reasoning if we believe that God exists because the scriptures say so. But the Indian view is that *Sruti* is the sole *pramāṇa* or means of knowing, the existence of God. It follows that unless God's existence is revealed it cannot even be conceived. The so called rational proofs of God's existence are nothing more than the explication of a revealed concept. In this sense the concept of God is a basic datum, but not a premiss since its truth has yet to be established, as far as we are concerned by an independent exercise of reason.

Now if we use the term Theology to apply to the intellectual articulation of truth, scripturally revealed, then according to me, all metaphysics is necessarily Theology, and thus the question, Is Indian philosophy philosophy or theology no longer arises. The real difference is between the philosophical system or tradition which recognizes the supernatural origin of philosophy and the philosophical system or tradition which is unconscious of this fact or would deny it if it were suggested. Indian philosophy alone belongs to the first category, while Western philosophy from the time of Plato, including Medieval philosophy to my mind commits the grave error of making philosophy wholly secular and treating the philosophical activity, not only as autonomous, but also as self-subsistent.

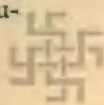
There is a further important consequence of this difference in the two traditions. It concerns the fact of revelation and the question of how this fact is to be established. As revelation is a historical fact, Christian thinkers have naturally, though uncritically assumed that the problem of establishing it is primarily a historical one, but the result is surely a very odd and embarrassing one for Religion. It would mean that History is the foundation of Religion and that faith in our salvation rests on an historical belief, which like all historical beliefs can never be certain, or at best can be certain with a natural and not a supernatural certainty. I do not understand how faith which is regarded as a super-natural virtue can originate from a belief belonging to an inferior order and which is inherently precarious, however massive the evidence

in its favour. It might be answered that the so-called 'preambles' are really a post-factum reconstruction, an attempt to show the reasonableness of a *pre-existent* faith. It is perfectly true that faith is anterior to reason and has no origin except in our relationship to God, but my point is that such a faith cannot *primarily* be a belief in a historical proposition. Historical beliefs, by themselves, are either rational or sub-rational, but not supra-rational. Belief in revelation is not primary, but is implied in our primary faith. This primary faith is a super-natural virtue and must be understood as the soul's unconditional fidelity to a metaphysical being which is veiled from the soul's direct vision. Thus not only is belief in God logically prior to belief in revelation, but the latter can only be arrived at as a deduction from the former. It is by showing the reasonableness of the primary or metaphysical faith, and not by a historical proof of revelation that we can provide the proper rationale of Religion.

Now according to Indian philosophy the soul's faith in the ultimate and in its own salvation has to be made active by revelation. Without this transcendental stimulus faith would be dormant and could not articulate itself as a system of philosophical beliefs. As faith is in the supernatural, only a revelation from the supernatural can be a proper instrument of its awakening. By supernatural faith I mean that faith which can be converted into vision only by a total self-transcendence, or transcendence of our given nature.

This truth of the priority of revelation to philosophy itself becomes clear when philosophy begins to articulate itself. Thus revelation, a historical fact, is the *ratio essendi* of an active faith formulating a metaphysical system, while metaphysics is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the historical fact of revelation. Historical reasoning can only prove that an event occurred. It cannot show that what occurred was a revelation. In any case such reasoning is no part of the necessary adumbration of the basis of Religion.

I feel that St. Thomas might have accepted this position that Metaphysics presupposes revelation if he had developed the true implication of his estimate of the nature and function of Reason. He believed that Reason unaided by revelation derives its ideas from sense-data and has no a priori idea of God. But instead of drawing from this the true conclusion that since our idea of God is a priori, (though not necessarily explicitly so) the metaphysical use of reason must necessarily presuppose revelation, St. Thomas' thought took a plunge into empiricism and, rejecting the ontological argu-





ment, insisted that the proof of God's existence must start with empirical premises. The proof becomes a posteriori and as such is neither scientific nor metaphysical. It is not scientific because the object proved is metaphysical, and it is not metaphysical because metaphysics is necessarily an a priori science of the a priori. If it were not so it would not be fully autonomous; any logical dependence on empirical data would at once destroy its autonomy and reduce it to the level of the natural sciences.

St. Thomas' actual method is, however, a curious mixture of the a priori and the a posteriori, or rather we should say that it is either a posteriori only in appearance, or that if it is really a posteriori, then it fails completely to prove the existence of God. Nothing is more certain than that from a genuinely empirical premise we can never arrive at a transcendental truth. If, however, St. Thomas had recognized the validity of the ontological argument—not necessarily St. Anselm's formulation of it—then his original insight that unaided reason cannot arrive a priori at the idea of God might have forced on him the conclusion that the very existence of this idea is sufficient to prove the fact of revelation.

We have not yet fully answered the objection that Indian philosophy is really theology. While it may be admitted that in an important sense all metaphysics is theology, we may still ask whether in asserting that what contradicts *Sruti* is untenable Indian philosophy is not theology in the Thomistic sense of the word. Is not *Sruti* in Indian philosophy regarded not only as a *pramāṇa* but also as the major premise of our reasoning about Brahman?

Let us consider the actual procedure of Indian philosophy to see whether the special position undoubtedly accorded to *sruti* leads to the above conclusion. There are in India two classes of philosophers, the orthodox and the unorthodox, according as they do or do not accept the authority of the Vedas. Our question is concerning the method of argumentation of the orthodox thinkers, the great Achāryas and their disciples. Is it dogmatic, i.e. theological, or does it leave room for the free exercise of reason? If we examine the actual method used we shall find that it is not dogmatic but philosophical. Yet the situation is a little complex and needs clarification.

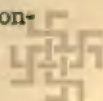
Let us take Śāṅkara as the typical philosopher of the orthodox school. When Śāṅkara argues with the unorthodox thinkers, e.g. the Buddhists he does not make any mention of *sruti*. Here at least his method is, without any ambiguity, philosophical in the techni-

cal sense of the word. When he is arguing with his orthodox opponents, Śankara shows first that their stand-point is in conflict with the revealed text and is therefore false. This is perfectly legitimate and not in the least dogmatic since his opponent has himself accepted the authority of *Sruti*, and Śankara is doing no more than to point out the inconsistency of the opponent who accepts an authority in theory but contradicts it in the views which he propounds.

If however, Śankara had done nothing more than this he would have been a theologian pure and simple, but Śankara's argument does not rest here. The appeal to *Sruti* is not the main burden of his argument or the only weapon to silence the opponent. It is only a preliminary statement with a view to compel his opponent to reconsider his position. Śankara then proceeds to show on independent logical grounds that the opponent's position is untenable, i.e. unacceptable to reason. The opponent is thus refuted twice over. It should be noted that in the course of the logical refutation the orthodox opponent is treated in the same way as the unorthodox, and the argument takes no support whatever from *Sruti*. It is non-authoritarian and purely philosophical.

Should we then say that Śankara is both a theologian and a philosopher and that he is doing two things side by side; expounding the true purport of the scriptures and constructing a coherent and autonomous logical system? It would appear that the theologian and the dialectician live together in one person and each goes his own way using the method appropriate to the task in hand.

This estimate of Śankara and Indian philosophy rests on the failure to appreciate the intimate relation that exists between *Sruti* and philosophy. Śankara is engaged not in two separate pursuits, but in a single pursuit of a complex kind. Reverence for *Sruti* is not only compatible with respect for the autonomy of Reason but is of incalculable value in the guidance and proper conduct of our rational faculty. As already explained, Reason has no power to discover Truth or the Infinite, it can only develop and formulate coherently the content and implications of a revealed concept. If therefore metaphysics is not self-born but is called into being by the revealed word, how necessary it is that it should maintain a very close association with the source of its being, and without surrendering its internal autonomy, make it also the perennial source of its inspiration. We must remember that freedom of thought is as much an ideal as an actual fact, and non-



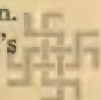


acceptance of authority (as a major premiss), though important and indispensable, is not the whole content of freedom. Actual thought may fall short of its own ideal in varying degrees and while resisting the coercion of an external authority may fall a victim to the coercion of passion, narrowness of outlook and the false intoxication which the autonomy of reason readily creates. This explains how the so-called rationalists in the history of thought have made such a poor and improper use of reason.

Other indispensable conditions of the freedom of thought are an ever-vigilant openness and plasticity that give vision to thought and keep it from becoming rigid, and a deep humility arising from the perception that thought is after all an instrument for formulating as 'truth' a mode of realization that exceeds its limited grasp. Thus philosophy has a natural affinity with theology and the two form a close and happy union. To tear out philosophy from its theological setting and context, as it is done in the West, is to effect a very artificial separation to the unavoidable detriment of philosophy itself. The Thomistic dualism of reason and faith and its bifurcation of the two spheres of truth can lead either to scepticism, as it did in the middle ages, or to the futilities of positivism and linguistic analysis, as it has done today.

If it is pointed out that there is in the method of Indian philosophy a danger of reason being unduly influenced or even swamped by authority, the answer is that the risk has to be accepted in the interests of a properly balanced functioning of reason. As a matter of fact, however, the danger has never materialized in Indian Philosophy and now, especially after coming in contact with the Western Masters of secular thought Indian thinkers will surely have risen above all danger of making an improper use of their spiritual resources. How the wise guidance of *Sruti* can operate without leading to dogmatism may be illustrated by an analogy. Let us suppose that with the aid of a mathematical formula we hit upon a proposition whose truth, however, must be established by the experimental methods. The formula then suggests a line of enquiry but does not dictate to the final result, since the proposition is empirical and can only be tested by empirical verification. Now what the mathematical formula is to empirical investigation, *Sruti* is to philosophical reasoning. *Sruti* reveals a truth to the mind that cannot obtain a direct possession of it. Hence the revelation becomes a metaphysical proposition, i.e. a truth reflected in the intellect. An intellectual acceptance of truth requires that it be stated in a rational form and this can only be done by an autonomous exercise of reason.

This is precisely the relation which has been emphasised in the Indian tradition. What comes after the hearing of truth (Sravana) is not its immediate acceptance. The heard truth has to be reflected on (manana), but the rational construction that is the result of thinking is not the end of the quest. Truth descends to our level in the form of *sruti*, so that, with its help we may ascend to the level of Truth. God becomes man, not to put his seal of approval on our imperfect and chaotic mode of life, but that man may arise out of the limitations of his humanity and become God by realizing his secret divinity. The philosopher must, through mystic contemplation, become the seer and in his turn a living *Sruti* for other seekers of truth. In passing I may mention that dogmatism raised its head in medieval philosophy precisely because of the separation between theology and philosophy. Sravana and manana instead of being organic parts of a single process fell apart and initiated two different and uncorrelated trains of activity, giving room for dogmatism and scepticism respectively. No Indian thinker would dream of saying, *Credo ut impossibile*, but such an attitude could conceivably arise by slow stages out of the initial mistake of separating the two disciplines. The consequence of this initial error is seen also in the failure on the part of Western secular thought to realize that philosophy is only an intermediate and transitional phase in our quest for truth. The secular approach is the result of confusing logical autonomy with ontological self-sufficiency and philosophy with science. Philosophy at its highest must be a sacred and not a secular activity, a reverential exercise of reason which keeps it within the bounds of revelation in a spirit not of blind acceptance, but of alert awareness lest the speculative system it constructs be only an exercise in ingenuity rather than the authentic voice of truth speaking to reason. The treatment of the self in Western philosophy is an outstanding illustration of such misplaced ingenuity. The conception of the Atman as ineffably one with the Supreme and the allied notions of avidya, adhyāsa and mokṣa, as also the category of the 'to be realized' are impossible of attainment by unaided reason, but when these concepts are presented to it reason can give them a form far more coherent and intellectually satisfying than it can to the concept of the self based on the scrutiny of the psychical series or bundles of perceptions which constitute our unregenerate existence. The 'self' of Bradley is not the true individual but only a public place, where the qualities of universal nature assemble and disperse. But that is the best Bradley could do from the seclusion of his ivory tower of abstract speculation. Sealing his ears against the unanimous declaration of the world's



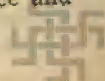


mystics that they have entered a living Truth in which time is lost and all nîsus destroyed, Bradley proceeds to inform us that the religious approach to Reality is wrecked by contradiction and that God is nothing more than the highest appearance! Instead of Religion he erects for our edification an unknowable Absolute which is no better than the God of Deism for the fact that we are parts of it, for to such an Absolute we are wholly lost and it is equally wholly lost to us. St. Bonaventure was perfectly right when he said that pagan philosophy must necessarily fall into error.

The above lengthy discussion might appear to the reader to be an argument more for the *status quo* than for the need for re-orientation of any kind, but I must remind him that the defence of the Indian approach which I have outlined above is not one which Indian philosophy gives of itself. An essay in self-awareness and self-discovery, a task by no means simple, is itself a necessary part of the total process of reorientation.

Apart from self-discovery there is also, as I have said above, a need for further self-development. I shall indicate briefly how the New Testament of Sri Aurobindo is related to the older darsanas.

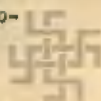
Logic, as Prof. K. C. Bhattacharyya has pointed out, follows spiritual experience in Vedanta. I have shown the precise sense of this dependence of logic on revelation, but this fact must be borne in mind when we attempt to estimate the truth of Śankara's Advaita and discuss the possibility of surpassing it in a more integral conception of Reality. Śankara's philosophy is an attempt at a logical formulation of the truth of Advaita which is, to begin with, not a theory but a direct realization. We must also recognize that as in spiritual experience there is a sense of inner fulfilment in which all knots are cut, all doubts destroyed, the logic that gives expression to it in conceptual terms will also achieve an inner coherence and convincingness that overcomes all intellectual doubts. I am of opinion that any logical system, if it reflects the soul's direct contact with Reality is irrefutable, provided the person who endorses that system has the requisite dialectical skill. Logic thus plays a comparatively small part in the process of conversion and a philosopher is not converted because he is refuted, but acknowledges his defeat in argument after he has been converted. Bearing these points in mind I shall hazard a brief estimate of Śankara's Advaita which is both a defence and a criticism.



We must distinguish, as Sri Aurobindo does, between essential knowledge and All-knowledge, between the foundational realization and the integral or total realization of Reality. The former marks the soul's salvation, its crossing the line of Ignorance or its phenomenal and transient limitations and its entrance into timeless Immortality and objectless Joy. The latter is a realization which is built upon the former which it seeks to complete by cancelling the negation which is implicit in the soul's movement towards salvation. Union with God in essence is achieved by leaving something behind, by discrimination and rejection of what is felt to be an obstacle to God. Now either that which is rejected is once more taken up from the higher station of self-knowledge or the soul's union with God and sought to be transformed into a fitting instrument of the indwelling divinity or it is rejected absolutely as an inexplicable *Māyā* indescribable as either real or unreal. Śankara takes the latter alternative, while Sri Aurobindo aims at a more comprehensive realization, in which an absolute and pure affirmation of the spirit reveals a divine sense in the evolutionary process and a divine reason for our earthly existence. For Sri Aurobindo salvation, which is a flight into the Divine, is not enough. This must be followed by a Divine Victory over those very forces from which the soul turns away in its Godward ascent. In this way a fundamental or essential realization carrying with it "an overwhelming sense of finality, complete and decisive" is yet surpassed and completed in an integral realization of the many-faceted Absolute.

Sri Aurobindo's integral approach and more comprehensive logic which he calls the logic of the Infinite<sup>3</sup> is made possible only by his revelation of the Supramental Truth-Creation as involved in Matter and pressing upwards for self-manifestation. Logic must follow revelation and it is this revelation that provides the first effective alternative to *Māyāvāda*. The popular belief is that Śankara's philosophy is *māyāvāda* while the other forms of Vedānta are not; but this view is hardly accurate. If by *māyāvāda* we understand a doctrine that rests on the failure to grasp the true secret of manifestation, then all philosophies before Sri Aurobindo, including those of Rāmānuja, Mādhva and others as well as Christian philosophies are so many different forms of *māyāvāda*. Śankara is to my mind only the most eminent and logically the most trenchant and consistent of all *māyāvādins*.

3. Cf. my paper of that title in the *Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress*, 1954.





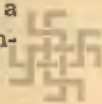
Thus in the pre-Aurobindonian era Śankara appears to occupy the highest peak of eminence, not because his system is logically impregnable, (as explained above all spiritual systems are in a sense impregnable, i.e., they create a sense of a coherent comprehensiveness which is not wholly illusory) but because the realization on which the system is erected is the most secure of all the realizations that penetrate the essence of Reality, but fall short of comprehending it in its totality. Advaita alone is the realization of the Ineffable in the strict sense of the word. The other Vedāntic realizations are wonderful but not ineffable, for in the ineffable all distinction and relationship must be transcended. They have not overcome fully all hazard and nīśus, since they are not self-sustained, but sustained only by a relationship. In them nīśus is sublimated but not lost. Nīśus is lost only when "the seer abides within himself", i.e. in self-realization. In relation to Advaita other realizations are only 'experiences', something 'got' and therefore, theoretically atleast, liable to be lost. In contrast, Advaita is trans-experiential. It alone is in this sense the *transcendental* truth. As such it is the basis of all other experiences or realizations, including the supramental realization of Sri Aurobindo.

We must understand Śankara's real intention in calling plurality an inexplicable illusion. Śankara's approach to Reality is essentially axiological and hence for him the terms real and unreal can have significance only in necessary relationship to sādhanā. Hence to call the world an illusion means that self-fulfilment is in the transcendent alone and that there is no conceivable fulfilment in plurality and the process of becoming taken as such. In this sense which form of Vedānta does not regard the world of manifestation as an illusion? None of the other Acharyas has explained the sense of manifestation which alone would justify him in calling it real. To say, as Rāmānuja does, that the world is the body of the Lord or His sportive creation does not take us a step beyond Śankara, for this is not inconsistent with calling the world an illusion in the sense explained. In fact Śankara is willing to admit the reality of the world in any sense in which its reality is demanded by other philosophers. For instance, he grants it pragmatic reality (vyavahārika satta). He does not deny that fire burns and so should be avoided or that it is useful for cooking and keeping us warm. Nevertheless it remains a product of Maya. Or if a realist says that to him objects are real in the sense that they exist whether we see them or not, he will find that Śankara not only agrees with him, but even turns his powerful dialectic

against the Vijnānavādins to establish that objects have an extra-mental existence.

Again, those who make a superficial comparative study of Indian and Western thought tell us that for Bradley, as distinguished from Śāṅkara, plurality is not an illusion but appearance and that appearances are somehow included in Reality. The contrast drawn here is really pointless. In the first place Bradley and Śāṅkara mean two different things by 'appearance'. For Śāṅkara 'appearance' means what seems to the self to be true as a result of the self's ignorance of its essential nature. Hence appearance is necessarily that which is to be transcended by the self for whom there is appearance. Bradley's conception of appearance is not adequately axiological and he therefore concludes that the self is condemned for ever to live in the world of appearances—this would appear to Śāṅkara as a confused and unintelligible notion of appearance. Secondly Śāṅkara is not at all interested in denying that the world is in Brahman. He even goes further and says that all that we see is verily Brahman itself. But having 'somehow' placed appearances in Reality what have we achieved? What significance have we given to the realm of appearances? By the mere fact of its inclusion in Brahman the world does not become a divine manifestation expressing or revealing the Light, the Harmony and Bliss of the Infinite. It continues to be an illusion in the sense that embodied existence in a changing environment contains as such no possibility of self-fulfilment.

Further, to call the world inexplicable is only a consequence of regarding it as an illusion. The term 'anirvacanīya' is not for Śāṅkara a confession of a failure to explain, but implies that the demand for explanation is not ultimate and if pressed beyond legitimate limits, indicates the working of Ignorance rather than a genuine urge for enlightenment. There is need for explanation because we are in the problem consciousness, and we are in this state because Reality is obscured by the veil of Ignorance. To explain is to point out that underlying all things that change and pass is the eternal self-effulgent spirit which is the self of all selves. To reach that self is to transcend wholly the problem consciousness and thenceforth to lose connaturality with the philosophical temper and its incessant demands for explanation. Having pointed the way to that Reality which is known ineffably and not as something contrasted with appearance, not, that is, as the solution of a problem, philosophy has fulfilled its mission and must give way to a deeper movement of consciousness, which seeks no longer a con-



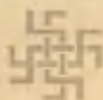


ceptual clarification but an inner illumination. The ultimate urge underlying philosophy itself is not the urge to explain, but to transcend as appearance that which creates the need for explanation. Darsana or system building is only the initial response to *mumuksatva* or longing for liberation. Ultimately there is no such thing as thinking for the sake of thinking. Hence if the occult intention of philosophy is realized all demand for the explanation of the illusory manifestation falls away, and if under the pressure of ignorance one continues to ask the whence and why of illusion, the reply that it is inexplicable is made on the principle that one must answer a fool according to his folly. The wise man knows that the sphere of manifestation, of name and form, contains nothing of permanent or transcendent value, and so is essentially a thing to be surpassed. It is therefore sufficiently explained as that which one must discard in the quest of Truth and does not call for any further explanation.

In some such way, and with even greater ingenuity and dialectical skill a Śāṅkarite may build up a logically impregnable philosophical system. And unsatisfactory as *māyāvāda* is to the deepest instinct in us for a truth that is all-comprehensive instead of all-exclusive, there would appear to be no secure alternative to it except in the revelation contained in the *Life Divine*.

Only a Sri Aurobindo can refute a Śāṅkara and he can do so not merely by a destructive criticism of the latter's illusionism, or even by a more persuasive and comprehensive logic, but mainly by revealing what Śāṅkara and others had failed to see, *viz* a divine sense and direction in the evolutionary process and a divine fulfilment not only in the transcendent, but here in our instrumental being and our earthly members. Sri Aurobindo has unleashed a very powerful, and to my mind wholly convincing dialectic against the rather desperate logic of Śāṅkara, though he accepts Advaita as one of the many penultimates of the one Ultimate. His criticism may be summed up in his own words, "The theory of Illusion cuts the knot of the world problem, it does not disentangle it; it is an escape, not a solution: a flight of the spirit is not a sufficient victory for the being embodied in this world of the becoming; it effects a separation from Nature, not a liberation and fulfilment of our nature. This eventual outcome satisfies only one element, sublimates only one impulse of our being; it leaves the rest out in the cold to perish in the twilight of the unreal reality of Maya."

Sri Aurobindo has devoted much space to the criticism of the logic of exclusion and escapism because he does not want the spiritual quest of India to end permanently in the flight from embodied existence. Nevertheless I feel that there is no necessary *dialectical* passage from Śankara to Sri Aurobindo. No sense of something lacking in the former, either in his realization or his logic will push a Śankarite forward towards a higher synthesis. The passage is not so much from negation to affirmation as from affirmation to completer affirmation. The complete truth cannot be anticipated in a purely logical manner. The spiritual fact on which it rests must first be revealed by a Master seer and its logical expression worked out by a Master thinker. This has been done in the Life Divine. In relation to Śankara Sri Aurobindo's revelation is *contingent*, almost something superimposed, claiming recognition not by ideal anticipation but by actual bodily presence. The Śankarite will be finally "refuted" not by the mere force of a superior logic but by being confronted with a *fait accompli*—the manifestation of the Supramental Light in Matter, Divinity made flesh, so that flesh may put on Divinity, leading to the realization of that ancient dream of humanity—the kingdom of Heaven on earth.





# Does Indian Philosophy Need Re-Orientation ?

## III

by

K. C. VARADACHARI

Tirupati

### *Indian Philosophy : Freedom, Reality and Value*

The basic problem of Philosophy in India is in a sense directed by the problem of Freedom which is more fundamental than the problem of Reality. Reality and Freedom are the fundamentals of philosophic exploration and attainment. The essential concept of Indian Philosophical thinking including the hedonistic Carvaka is Reality—Freedom, the essential axiological nature of truth. Truth is not merely to be known but is to be lived: this is the general teaching of Indian Philosophical Tradition. The attempt to separate the two spheres, as Western Philosophy appears to do, will be philosophically unsatisfactory. It will not be a re-construction.

Neither Materialism nor Vitalism is helpful in solving the problem of Freedom. According to recent Psychology, even mental activities develop mechanistic tropisms; therefore the quest for freedom at these levels is vain. Like Indra, in the Chandogya Upanishad (8. vii-15) we may progressively discover and reach new levels but each level may become an obstacle to further progress if it is treated as the final end. The realisation of absolute freedom is identical with the realisation of the highest Reality. This is the meaning of the concepts of *Mokṣa* and Reality in Indian Philosophy; these concepts are integral to each other.

Our problem is whether this traditional knowledge is helpful to us at present. Our exclusive devotion to technical and economic interests in the contemporary age has obscured the concept of reality and value. Nevertheless, the concept of freedom is of fundamental importance to the contemporary world, and it is through this that we can link up the contemporary adventure in Scientifico-Economic-value with the concepts of *Reality-value* in Metaphysics and of Social Philosophy. This is parallel to the *Mukti-Puruṣārtha* and the *Kāmārtha Puruṣārtha* of ancient Indian thought.

*Past Re-constructions in Indian Philosophy*

Reconstruction is possible either from the Mechanistic or from the Idealistic stand-point. While the spiritual attitude is an experience pertaining to the axiological nature of Reality as Freedom, the materialistic attitude is the Freedom of a Hedonistic life. The concepts of *Iha* and *Para* (here and hereafter) illustrate this antithesis.

It is wrong to say that there has not been any reconstruction or re-formulation in Indian Philosophy in the past. All Vedantas are new formulations of the nature of the Reality. In the field of Dharma-Shastras, ethical and social dynamics, we have evidence of a continuous re-formulation of the Ethical Codes and Practices. The history of Indian Philosophy is a series of movements of thought seeking different formulations, if not solutions, of the problems of metaphysics and life. While Advaita has been exalted and the issue diverted to a discussion of Monism or Absolutism, other philosophical formulations in other schools of the Vedanta are accepted as giving as much consistent and satisfactory account of Reality as Advaita. In the field of Methodology, Indian Philosophy has been critical and the spirit of its Critical Method has given rise to the *Pramāṇśāstra*, Science of Methodology, which is an examination into the 'origin, conditions and limits' of the instruments of knowledge, Perception, Inference, Intuition & etc. While some have emphasised intuitive experience, there are methodological revivalists who affirm the validity of other modes of knowledge and 'ways of knowing'.

That the history of Indian thought has never been static but has always been a process of examination and criticism could be shewn by a study of the transformation that its major concepts have undergone. We could have several papers of research on the several concepts used in Indian Philosophy such as *Māyā*, *Avidyā*, *Karma*, *Śeṣa*, *Viśeṣa*, *Vijñāna* and so on. The concepts of mind (*manas*), *ātman*, *prakṛti* etc., also have undergone evolution. The two terms *Pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* have had a history of their own. As Whitehead has stated echoing the words of Wallace: "The use of Philosophy is to maintain an active novelty of fundamental ideas illuminating a social system. Philosophy is mystical, for mysticism is direct insight into depths as yet unknown. But the purpose of Philosophy is to rationalise mysticism not by explaining it away but by introduction of novel verbal characteristics rationally co-ordinated." It is impossible to introduce novel verbal characteristics merely for the sake of introducing novelty in order to attract in-

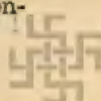


dividuals to a new jargon. It is precisely because it is not easy to do so without what we call "experience" that we recognize a new philosophy as a New System only when we recognize the new experience underlying that philosophy. For the large mass of mankind insensitive to new development and in assimilation to customary ways of thinking, it is perhaps unnecessary to parade the idea of new philosophies. But we are now witnessing a new tempo of human activity, a development of mind which is becoming aware of the larger challenges of thought and life. So we may yet take our inspiration from the ancient Seer who spoke about the practice of togetherness of contraries (opposites) *vidyānca-avidyānca yas tad vedo ubhayam saha or sambhūtimca vināśamca yas tad vedo ubhayam saha*—and pursue our philosophic endeavour, which may lead us to real reconstruction in Indian Philosophy.

Many of the writers in the volume on *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* edited by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, show us one of the ways in which the philosophies of Ancient India, mainly the Vedānta, lead to re-interpretation and re-construction. This re-interpretation made by the Indian mind is, in the main, through the media of Western intellectual philosophy. These philosophies are in a profound sense impact-philosophies rather than integrative-philosophies. These impact-conscious philosophies fail to arrive at a true integral apprehension and thought or what Sri Aurobindo calls, the Real Idea of Reality.

### *Sri Aurobindo*

The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo has taken its stand on what we may call the integral realisation of Reality in all its planes of expression and experience. It is not merely a restatement but a reconstruction of the ancient unity of experience! the One-Many Changeless-Change, Process, Progress and Purpose, Individual—Universal, and *Nirguṇa* and *Saguna*, Personal and Impersonal, Ethical and Supraethical and so on, and a revaluation of the concepts of Evolution and Involution. The integralism of Sri Aurobindo reveals an insight into the integral Nature of Reality as Existence, as Intelligence and as Delight. Sri Aurobindo's reconstructive insight is richer and profounder than the best of the Eastern and the Western thinkers. The past is conserved and transformed in the context of the Integral Philosophy. Dr. S. K. Maitra (of the Banaras Hindu University) has demonstrated the new advance and modification made by Sri Aurobindo in the concepts of Western Philosophy in the light of Indian Philosophy.



The merit of Sri Aurobindo's approach is that his insight is claimed to be derived from the dynamic status of the Supermind. The transcendental concept of evolutionary power and plenitude is lacking in others, for this power is granted in a transmutive sense to the Ultimate Spirit or Person in the other and earlier philosophies and sadhanas. Prof. Malkani apparently holds that there is no need to assume the supermind as the Absolute Spirit or intellectual intuition is enough to explain transcendence. Intellectual intuition is a hybrid. It would not be correct to create a fundamental dichotomy between intellect and intuition merely because the intellect has taken the role of analysis through the principle of contradiction and has later attempted the synthesis on the basis of dialectic. This is of course inherently a vicious process, or, as the ancient Indian thought has stated, it is intellect that operates on the basic structure of *avidyā*. It is perhaps the greatest merit of Aurobindonian analysis of the human mind to show up this nature as the biological or evolutionary result, rather than a fundamental function of the intellect when it operates from the structure of the Supermind. This is to assert that the future of Philosophy lies not in the annihilation of Intellect (and its fulgurative functions—*prapancikaraṇa*) or *niṣprapancikaraṇa* but its transformation as the instrument of the Supermind.

It is necessary to emphasize this aspect of the future possibility. The position taken by the exponents of the opposition between intellect and intuition is that philosophy is the attempt to explain reality in terms of the intellect and its accidental mode of finite intelligibility through the logic of the principles of contradiction, coherence and so on. The metaphysics of finite logic has been found to lead us nowhere. It is a dragon that slays the action, the creative being. It is necessary to instruct intellect with the logic of the infinite the real the thing-in-itself—which is grasped undoubtedly by the knowledge of the transcendental *Saccidānanda*. But where many see the end of Philosophy, (indeed this is said to be the highest of Experience) we have to see the beginnings of a new philosophy reconstructed by the intellect now laden with the logic of the Infinite.

It was suggested by me several years ago at this Congress in 1947 that what we need is the spirit of philosophizing proceeding from the Logic of the Infinite to evaluate and understanding the *darśanas* from the point of view from which they were formulated (namely the supra-mental). This mode of evaluation seems to have been lost sight of and finally abandoned by most or all of

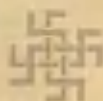


the commentators of the darśanas, who have left us expositions based on the logic of the finite. It is necessary to reconstruct the darśanas too in the light of the supra-mental logic of the Infinite.

It must have been something of a clear insight into this status of the intellect that was at the back of the exposition of its nature by Rene Guenon, the French Orientalist, in his study of the Hindu Doctrines (p. 41ff). In India also the word Buddhi as Vijnāna is essentially different from the mental, for its activity is a liberating one; it reflects the eternal and the Infinite, and goes beyond the limiting and dichotomising principle of contradiction.

Therefore it is clear that we are to-day in a position to undertake a careful reconstruction of the Indian Philosophical schools or Indian Philosophy itself that is based on the Logic of the Infinite and the Infinite experience. Though Vedanta may well claim that all has been said theoretically about the matter, it would yet be necessary to attain the Being that is Creative Eternity foreboded in the Concept of Supramental Evolution.

Not merely has Knowledge not come to an end with Being but it is itself the Being that is creative Infinity. This is the inner dynamis of the Supermind. Philosophy in this New Key is yet to be fully articulated though some of the foundations have been well and truly laid by some of our modern seers Sri Aurobindo, Maharsi, Radhakrishnan and J. Krishnamurti.



## Symposium II

### The Philosophical Basis of Social Revolution

#### I

*by*

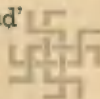
D. M. DATTA

#### I

Before we discuss the philosophic basis of social revolution, it will be helpful to consider briefly the wider question, namely, how philosophy is related to social organization in general. For, it may be thought by many that even human society, like the societies of bees, ants, elephants and other gregarious animals, grows and changes unconsciously, and the societal structure is the result of blind physical, biological and economic forces, rather than of conscious planning based on any social philosophy. Though the contention is largely true, there are important exceptions which will largely concern us here.

If philosophy is taken in the wider sense of a pattern of beliefs and attitudes towards the problems of life and the world, then it is possible to trace different kinds of inarticulate philosophies behind different patterns of social attitudes and behaviours. These unwritten philosophies are none the less very active forces lying at the root of society. It is these which often manifest themselves into well-argued systems of thought when they are challenged, confronted and criticized on the conscious level. When social philosophy, in the stricter sense, is thus developed, it becomes a strong force capable of producing enormous changes in society.

Whatever might have been true of the past, modern human society is forced, by the stress of complicated circumstances and constant criticism, to shape itself with careful deliberation and far-sighted plans, in respect of its economic and political structure, its family units, its total population, international policies, etc. One of the bases of such sound planning must be a sound philosophy of man and values. Man has so often been deceived in recent times in different lands by political saviours with promises of 'Aryans' Paradise', 'Lebensraum', 'Classless Society', 'Pure Land'





and the like, that he cannot afford to assent blindly to any social plan without examining closely its rational basis, the philosophy behind it. He must know whether he will be regarded as a tool, a mere means to the society's ends, or as an end, as a centre of values for the realization of which he will have the necessary freedom and opportunity. He must know whether man is considered, in that social structure, a mere Pavlovian animal fit to be conditioned, reconditioned and regimented in accordance with the scheme of the dictators, or regarded as also a spiritual being having his own inner potentiality capable of free development. He must know whether man is regarded as a naturally pugnacious and self-centred being unworthy of trust and respect, or whether he is recognised to possess an inherent goodness and love for fellow beings as well. Above all he must understand the moral basis of the social scheme, and the values it aims at—whether that scheme is based on narrow class-interest, and hatred and prejudice against other groups, or on a wider human outlook, and whether it aims at only the maximum production and consumption of material goods, or treats these as a means to higher values. It is found thus that sound social planning must have, among other things, a sound social philosophy as its basis.

The philosophy of a human group, of a particular age and country is reflected in some basic categories expressed in words which guide social thought, judgment and emotions, and thereby social activity. A comparative study of the different sets of key categories that consciously guide different societies will yield very instructive and interesting knowledge about the inner dynamics of social life. Just consider, for a rough illustration, the following sets:—(1) God, man, sin, hell, saviour, faith, hope, love, charity, thrift, redemption, heaven. (2) Matter, nature, dialectic, man, class-struggle, labour, capital, bourgeois, capitalist, proletariat, dictatorship, production, purge, classless society, withering of the state. (3) Brahman, ātman, ajñāna, āsakti, adharma, karma, bandhana, duḥkha, jñāna, dharma, niṣkāma-karma, mokṣa, ānanda, (4) T'ien (Heaven), Ming (Will of Heaven), Tao (The Way), Yang-yin (Activity-Passivity), Li (proper conduct), Hsiao (filial piety), Jen (human-heartedness), Ch'eng (realization). (5) Democracy, freedom, defence, economic development, total employment, production, consumption, standard of living, amenities, 'our heritage,' 'our posterity'.

It will be readily seen that each of these sets of categorical words listed by us roughly defines the philosophical outlook of a

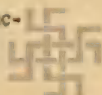
distinct group which you can even identify with its help. You can find out through each of these what Karl Marx<sup>1</sup> calls the 'ideology' of the people, and also what social philosophers call the 'ethos' and 'mores' of a people. Even these disconnected category-symbols, charged with suggestions of positive and negative values, arouse emotions and ideas, and move men to action. Indeed, one of the notable things about the philosophical writings of China is that they contain just the lists of ideograms, the disconnected pictures of ideas. And yet their influence is untold. As Professor Fung Yu Lan observes: "The sayings and writings of the Chinese philosophers are so inarticulate that their suggestiveness is almost boundless."<sup>2</sup>

The social categories evolve out of common social atmosphere of ideas, beliefs, emotions and needs. Sometimes through common, informal discussion, and sometimes through rigorous and formal, scientific and philosophical thinking. They are used and tried in daily life, and those that survive and are accepted, gradually become part of the unchallenged, self-luminous categories and values that form the basic mental dynamism of the society, or what may be regarded, from another point of view, as the mental component of the culture of the society, or described in Indian terms as the *samskāras* (or the *samskr̥ti*) of the society. It forms the stock-in-trade of the social mind, along the fixed groove of which ideas move, in the light of which new ideas are judged and tested. War-time propaganda, peace-time planning, appeals of social leaders, are all based on the accepted set of categories. Understanding between any two or more groups is effected by emphasis on the categories common to them, and conflicts are generated by emphasis on categories in which they differ.

No fundamental change in any society can be brought about without a change in its basic categories, or at least without a great change of emphasis in the existing set. Old categories are sometimes consciously rejected, and sometimes they unconsciously fade out of use. If we glance back at the five lists of key categories previously given by us, we shall see that set no. (1) which used to be the common mental stock of the Christian West has been consciously rejected by the Communist West in favour of set no.

1. Vide J. A. Leighton, *Social Philosophies in Conflict* (Appleton), Chaps. 18-20.

2. Fung Yu Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 12 (Macmillan, 1948).





(2), whereas it is tending to be replaced by set no. (5) in the Anglo-American world through a repeated change of emphasis on the latter. We do not yet know how far the basic mental culture of China has changed; but apparently it has recently replaced its traditional set no. (4), by the communist set. India presents the picture of a split personality. Its time-honoured and time-worn set, no. (3), has been strengthened, re-interpreted and revived into active operation by the greatest social leaders of recent times, but the impact of the West has been strongly attracting it towards no. (5), sometimes also to some categories of set no. (2), e.g. "classless society".

One of the most important tasks of philosophy as a rational discipline is an examination of all current categories, their rational bases, their internal consistency and mutual compatibilities, and their implications. If it is recognised that human society can no longer be based on blind passions, prejudices and physical force, then such a rational process has also to be recognised as indispensable. Fortunately this truth is being more and more accepted to-day.

An effective philosophy which shows the weakness, inadequacy and incompatibility of existing categories, lays the rational foundation of desirable social changes. But to make it socially acceptable a philosopher has to earn the right to be listened to, as Janaka, Confucius, Buddha, Socrates and others did with their own lives dedicated to the cause of truth.

## II

In the light of the fore-going discussion we can investigate now the philosophic basis of social revolution, that is to say, how and how far philosophy can be the cause or support of any revolutionary change in society—economic, political, cultural, structural, or of any other kind. For the sake of precision it will be good to start with some fairly accepted definition of revolution. In the *Dictionary of Sociology* it is defined as: "A sweeping, sudden change in the societal structure or in some important feature of it. A form of social change distinguished by its scope and speed. It may or may not be accomplished by violence... The essence of revolution is the sudden change, not the violent upheaval."<sup>3</sup> Social revolution is more explicitly described as: "The Sudden passing

3. *Dictionary of Sociology* (Library of Phil., 1944).



of a social order, especially its social hierarchy. A social revolution is a thorough-going revamping of the constellations of power, prestige, and privilege in a society."<sup>4</sup>

Accepting this meaning of revolution provisionally, we find that the important elements in the concept of revolutionary change are its suddenness and its thorough-going character, not necessarily its violent nature. Revolution as a *sudden* change can be, and often has been, brought about in the political sphere by sheer brute force. Sudden changes can also be made in other spheres of society by State legislation. There have recently been such legal attempts in India for the abolition of child marriage, caste discrimination, landlordism etc. But experience tells us that such sudden changes externally imposed do neither last, nor serve their real objects, unless the social mind is prepared and changed. It will be all the more true if revolution means a *thorough-going* change. For, such a change can never be achieved without an effective policy that can appeal to reason and accepted values, change the heart, generate abiding sentiments, sustain all-round enthusiasm and call forth moral support.

This position may be unacceptable to some followers of Marx and Engels since these thinkers have advocated the view that the entire culture of a society, including its philosophy, is the product of the prevalent economic system,<sup>5</sup> of which revolution is another effect. The proletarian revolution, for example, is produced by the dialectic "bursting asunder" of the capitalist system whereby "the expropriators are expropriated."<sup>6</sup> So it would seem to follow that philosophy and revolution are only the co-effects of a particular economic system; philosophy cannot be thought to be the basis—a causal condition or a supporting antecedent—of revolution.

The answer to such an objection can be found in the history of Marxism itself. If Marx's philosophy or ideology does not in any way cause or support revolution, then the careful process of indoctrination and the world-wide propagation of Marxist literature would be a meaningless futility. The more consistent view would seem to be that though philosophy may be partly caused by economic conditions, it becomes in turn the cause of new social, economic conditions. A more balanced Marxist view found in the

4. *Ibid.*, (Our Italics).

5. *Vide German Ideology*, pp. 13-14 (Lawrence and Wishart).

6. *Capital*, p. 95 (Burman's abridged edition).



*Soviet Philosophical Dictionary* under 'Ideology' is:—"Ideology comes into being as the reflection of material conditions of social life and of determinate class interests and has an active influence on the development of society. Progressive ideology serves the interests of the revolutionary forces in society . . . Ideology plays an enormous part in public life and in the history of society."<sup>7</sup> So philosophical treatises like the *Text Book of Marxism, Dictionary of Philosophy* (which rewrites the history of philosophy from Stalin's point of view) are circulated in millions of copies, to support the revolutionary outlook and check anti-revolutionary trends. Marxist philosophy is thus the best example that shows how a philosophy can become the basis—the cause and support—of a social revolution.

It is true that if suddenness be regarded as the main character of a revolution, philosophy cannot be regarded as its *immediate cause*. It takes a long time for a new philosophy to spread and grow and strike root. The rather slow process of a successful social philosophy is to analyse, examine, criticize, accept and refute an existing set of categories which lie deep-rooted in the social mind, and then to replace them by a new coherent system of concepts, supported by strong reasons and possessed of sufficient emotional appeal. The new categories of thought must be constantly used and instilled into the mind of the people until they come to possess the mind as self-evident truths and obvious values about the desirability of which there cannot be any question. It is only then that the social mind is ready to take fire, burst or plunge ahead in precipitate action causing a revolution. The conflagration may take place suddenly, and an insignificant antecedent event may rightly claim to be the immediate causal condition, as having ignited the spark. But the spectacular immediate cause is insignificant in importance as compared with the underlying philosophy. Even the Marxist philosophy took at least fifty years to grow, mature and take practical shape through successive followers, but its importance as the basis of the communist revolution is never under-rated.

Revolution is often preceded by cultural crisis. The cause of such a crisis is well stated by Wilbur Urban, one of the founders of the modern philosophy of values, thus:—"Culture has been described as 'the measure of things taken for granted.' When

7. Extracts from the *Soviet Philosophical Dictionary*, p. 14 (Congress for Cultural Freedom, Paris).

within a given culture things are no longer taken for granted, a crisis in culture ensues.<sup>8</sup> There may be several causes for doubting things previously taken for granted. For example, (a) contact with a foreign culture, (b) discovery of new truths, (c) the invention of new machines outmoding old ones, or other causes altogether upsetting the old economic system, (d) the internal inconsistencies (e.g., between ideals and practices) and their self-destructive consequences, etc. Human nature is, however, conservative and a culture does not easily give way. In spite of conflict a culture often tends to save itself by psycho-pathological devices like logic-tight compartments, distortion and rationalization etc., as we have tried to show elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> A kind of social insanity results from this, as has happened in our country in consequence of the conflicts among Hindu, Muslim and Western Cultures. Such a social condition may pave the way to drastic revolutionary changes, and sometimes bring about opposite kinds of evils. But a dispassionate philosophical study of the conflicting elements, assessment of their relative values in the light of the acceptable ideals, and understanding of the desirable changes can supply the necessary basis of a sound revolution.

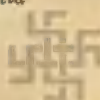
It was said previously that revolution means sweeping, thorough-going or extensive changes. But it should be pointed out that even a drastic revolution does not, and cannot, altogether break with the past. Every revolutionary philosophy considers some elements of the existing system of categories to be of fundamental value and importance, and uses them as the spring-board in order to discard elements not compatible with them. For example, Buddhism which revolted against the Brahminical society is found, on careful analysis, to have stood firm on the previous categories of karma, avidyā, duḥkha, bandhana, dharma, jñāna, mokṣa etc., though these were re-interpreted and re-organized, and used for discarding castes, priests, gods, rituals and souls. Indeed we find that while decrying the so-called Brahmins, Buddha depicts the ideal Brahmana in glowing terms.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly while Marx is so critical of Hegel, he uses Hegel's dialectic and historical method as the corner stones of his own

8. Urban, *Axiology*, in *Twentieth Century Phil.*, p. 69 (phil. Lib. 1947).

9. *Psychology of Culture Conflicts in the light of the Psy. of insanity*—pap for Indian Science Congress, 1947 (pub. *Ind. Jour. Psy. and Calcutta Review*).

10. *Dhammapada*, brahmana-vaggo.





system. As Lenin admits,<sup>11</sup> German Philosophy, English Political Economy and French Revolutionary Socialism were also utilised by Marx for building his system, though he was bitterly critical of these in many respects. The most instructive fact perhaps is that while Marx so vehemently denounces religion, he imbibed and transmitted into his revolutionary school some of the basic elements of the Judaic religion including exclusiveness and intolerance. Arnold Toynbee points out how Judaic ideas come back in secular disguise in Marxism, for example, "the chosen people" disguised as "the proletariat", "the Gentiles" as the "Bourgeoisie", "the Apocalypse" as "Communist Revolution", "the Millennium" as "the Withering of the State."<sup>12</sup> It is found thus that though a revolution may outwardly look very extensive and thorough-going it grows from some old roots though in new forms and directions.

### III

So far we have discussed the different aspects of revolution in the light of the provisional definition which does not regard violence as a necessary element. But the word 'revolution' has been brought into frequent use, and made into a self-evident category of value by Communism, so much so that even Vinobaji adopts it and is eager to show that his land-gift movement is a revolution (*krānti*). I dare say that the choice of this subject for our symposium is also the result of the same pervasive influence. So it is very necessary that we should discuss the communist idea that violence is a necessary element of revolution.

The communist belief in the necessity of violence arises from two other more fundamental beliefs, namely that man is a material, pugnacious being evolving through class-struggle, and that morality is a matter of convenience. Marx says, "*Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one.*"<sup>13</sup> Marx, Engels and Lenin all try to inculcate the idea that there is nothing like a universal principle of morality valid for all men. Engels thinks that "morality was always class morality," a justification of the "interests of the ruling class. There is nothing like an eternal, immutable moral law."<sup>14</sup> Lenin pronounces more categorically, "We say that our morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the

11. *The Teachings of Karl Marx*, p. 10.

12. *Hibbert Jour.*, July, 1954, p. 324.

13. *Capital*, p. 75, Our Ital.

14. Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, p. 89.



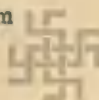
class struggle of the proletariat. We deduce our morality from the fact and needs of the class struggle."<sup>15</sup> Such being the philosophy of man and morals, it is but natural that they should believe in physical force and violence, rather than in appeal to moral sense and reason. Marx declares, "Between equal rights force decides." In the *Communist Manifesto* he naturally advocates the "forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions."

We have discussed elsewhere the inherent contradictions of this philosophy.<sup>16</sup> We can only briefly mention here that if the object of any revolution be to restore the lost dignity of man it cannot be based on the distrust of man's inherent worth and his high moral and spiritual potentiality. To have a sincere regard for man is to have faith in his reason and love, and to desist from deceiving him, injuring him, coveting his things and treating him in any improper way. The basic moral principles of truthfulness, non-violence, non-selfishness, self-restraint, etc., logically follow from respect for man. They have stood the test of repeated experiments in the evolution of human society which is now believed to have existed over a million years. They are indispensable for any lasting social organization. So there is no society, no religion, which do not value and encourage morality. Real democracy which is based on the respect for every person, as an end and sacred centre of value, is logically pledged, therefore, to morality.

On the contrary, any philosophy of man which distrusts man and morals and encourages violence, leads by its very nature to degradation of man in every way. Any revolution based on such a philosophy carries the seed of its own destruction. For, it is caught up in a mounting spiral of force, fear, hatred, suspicion, secrecy, surveillance, purge, exile, assassination and increasing fear. So on it goes, saves none—not even the wife of the topmost marshal. No one being above suspicion, all power tends to concentrate into one supreme, military dictator—a living embodiment of denied democracy, seated at the pinnacle of an increasing hierarchy of regimented classes, until the nemesis of outraged humanity takes care of him. A violent revolution extirpates the vanquished, and divides the survivors into two classes—bullies and cowards. It is an all-round ruination of society. Its short-lived glamour of success ends in dis-illusionment.

15. Lenin, *Religion* (Burman), p. 60.

16. *The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, Chap. on Marxism (Cal. Uni. 1950).





This picture of social pathology resulting from violence and neglected morality will strongly remind you of the recent histories of Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy and Stalin's Russia. But let us not indulge in suicidal self-righteousness to gloat over the faults of others. Let us rather reflect with humility on the recent history of India which boasts of Gandhi, Vinoba and Nehru, and let us ponder over the sporadic acts of violence which crept into the otherwise non-violent movement of Gandhiji in 1942, and the demoralizing consequences thereof manifested in the ever-increasing acts of mob violence and governmental reprisals in different parts of the country, to-day.

The wise men of India named the basic moral principles *dharma* because, as the *Mahābhārata* says, it holds together or sustains people (—dhāraṇāt dharmam ityāhuḥ, dharmeṇa vidhṛtāḥ prajāḥ).<sup>17</sup> Manu says, "Dharma being ruined ruins, dharma preserved preserves". (Dharma eva hato hanti, dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ).<sup>18</sup> He further adds, to quote the English paraphrase of Tagore, "By unrighteousness man prospers, gains what appears desirable, conquers enemies, but perishes at the root." (Adharmeṇaidhate tāvat-tato bhadraṇi paśyati, tataḥ sapatnān jayati samūlastu vinaśyati).<sup>19</sup> How true and prophetic these wise words are, seen in the light of recent history !

Bitter sufferings of the recent past and grim prospects of total destruction have created to-day a great hatred against violence and immoral means all over the world. Through painful ordeals and travails humanity has been developing a much higher moral consciousness in social and international spheres than ever known before. As the nations are coming closer and closer, the best wisdom of all lands and times is being absorbed by the best minds of all countries. It is this moral adolescence of the present age that made it possible for a moral hero like Mahatma Gandhi to be born, and to assimilate, in terms of his native categories, the universal moral precepts of the greatest teachers of the world. His moral genius saw, and tenaciously proved through untold personal suffering and sacrifice, the applicability of all moral principles to all kinds of social organization. He disproved the common belief

17. *Mahābhārata*, Śānti-parva, 109.

18. *Manu-smṛti*, 8, 15.

19. *Ibid.*, 4, 174; quoted by Tagore in *Crisis in Civilization* (Viswabharati, 1941).



that mass enthusiasm necessary for social revolution can be aroused only by fomenting the baser violent passions, and that the enemy can be conquered only by force, and that a subject nation can be liberated only by war.

The possibility of a non-violent revolution by moral persuasion is being demonstrated once again by Gandhi's worthy colleague, Vinoba, who has collected about 5 million acres of voluntary gift for the landless peasants, as the first step towards the equal distribution of land.

This new Indian method of social revolution has awakened great interest and hopes for the violence-weary world. We should like, therefore, to conclude this paper with a brief reflection on the basic philosophy underlying this new approach.

The belief in the innate goodness of man is the foundation of this view. Though it may be said to be inherited by Gandhi and Vinoba from previous thinkers, they adopted it as a practical postulate in all dealings with men, and the results repeatedly confirmed their belief. That there are the selfish animal propensities also in man is not denied. But it is recognised that love, reason and other good moral propensities in him, if encouraged and developed, can overcome the baser inclinations. Practical dealings prove that the goodness of man can be awakened and increased only by patient, sympathetic and trustful behaviour—which means that one must oneself be good to be able to arouse the goodness in others. The Gandhian technique starts, therefore, with self-examination, self-purification and self-development as the pre-requisite of social service. To generate the enthusiasm of the people for the attainment of an ideal the worker must, by his high moral character, have earned the love and respect of the people, and must be prepared to lay down his own life for the ideal, if necessary. The most difficult part of the task is to win over by love and reason even the determined opponent blinded by self-interest and ready to use all immoral and violent means rather than yield an inch of his unrighteous ground. For Gandhi this is the real test of faith. It is a call for increasing the faith in the inner goodness of every man, even an apparent villain, whose villainy is only an outer crust of mistaken ideas and consequent passions which can be removed by loving appeal to reason, by patiently suffering, without bitterness and ill will, the tyrannies of the erring brother until his heart melts into penitent love, and his reason shines forth, to reveal his



errors to him. Repeated practice of this philosophy of man, in private and public dealings in different lands, confirmed Gandhi's faith more and more. Where he failed he blamed *not man*, but his insufficient preparation, and went into solitary heart-searching to find out his short-comings.

As love and respect for man lie at the centre of this view, and all moral laws follow therefrom, morality enters into every dealing of man with man—private and public, economic and political, social and cultural, national and inter-national. So there is but *one morality*, for *all* and in *all* spheres. "My life is one indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another, and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of mankind."<sup>20</sup> This outlook takes a concrete shape in Gandhi's social movement which he names *Sarvodaya*—the uplift of all in all spheres. This bears a contrast not only to the class concern of Communism, but also to the majority concern of Anglo-American Democracy, based on the utilitarian principle of 'the greatest good of the greatest number'—which pattern free India has adopted, leaving the minority to the care of God.

As the Gandhian method implies that every action should be moral, there is no room for a bad means in pursuit of a good end. "As the means so the end." "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to the tree."<sup>21</sup> A bad means bears a bad fruit; and besides, it at once corrupts the doer. Every moral effort ennobles and elevates. It is its own reward, irrespective of success which is not always within one's own control. "Full effort is full victory."<sup>22</sup>

This philosophy of man and morals finds today an echo in every human heart, conscious of the dignity of man. While it appeals to the universal moral sense of all peoples, it admits of being phrased differently in the categories of different cultures and traditions, e.g., of Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Judaism, Confucianism, and even of secular, naturalistic humanism, in fact all "those who realize that there is something in man which is superior to the brute nature in him."<sup>23</sup> Gandhi put it to the Indians in the traditional local categories of *satya*, *ahimsā*, *asteya*, *aparigraha*, *abhaya* etc., which he revived into live categories by prac-

20. Vide N. K. Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 45.

21. *Ibid.*, 37-8.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 183.



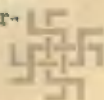
tising them all his life. He also evolved and vitalized by mass practice new categories to suit new situations, e.g., satyāgraha, sarvodaya, Harijana, non-violent non-cooperation, civil disobedience etc. Vinoba started with Gandhian categories, and the old Indian ones still moving Indian minds (e.g., dāna, yajña, tyāga, tapas, dharma etc.). But he also has been evolving new categories to suit his new field (e.g., Bhūdānayaajña, Jīvanadāna, loka-nīti, vichāra-śāsana, kartṛtva-vibhājana, śānti-pūrṇa-krānti etc.).<sup>24</sup> Both Gandhi and Vinoba have their personal theistic 'over-beliefs' (as William James, would say). But their social plans are all based on the universal moral principles by following which human society could survive so long, and can progress in the future. In his Autobiography Gandhi even declares that the "essence of religion is morality."<sup>25</sup>

Gandhi had the humility to realize that his social experiments in peaceful moral revolution were far from complete, and there was infinite scope for new experiments and discoveries in this line in different spheres and countries.<sup>26</sup> The path of distrust, hatred and violence has brought humanity face to face with total destruction. There is no choice left to man, therefore, but to retrace his steps, and try to re-organize all social and human relations on the tried principles of human survival—on trust and love, and all that follow therefrom. If social revolution is to avoid the path of destruction it must necessarily be a moral, non-violent revolution.

24. *Vide Bhudana-Yajna* (a weekly, Gaya) *Passim*.

25. P. 5 (Public Press Edn.).

26. *Vide Bose's Selections*, pp. 25, 31-2. For a fuller treatment reference may be made to our *The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, (Wisconsin University Press, 1953).





# The Philosophical Basis of Social Revolution

## II

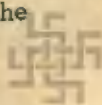
by

J. B. KRIPALANI

How is philosophy concerned with social revolution? To understand this it is necessary to define the field of knowledge that philosophy covers. Roughly speaking, philosophy seeks to find some rational explanation of the mystery of the universe, of all that there is. Is there any consistent and synthetic unity behind the flux that we see with all its varieties, differences and contradictions? Is there a primal uncaused cause? What is its nature? How does it function? What is man who asks these questions and seeks an answer? Is he an ethereal soul or spirit, encased in a material frame or the evolutionary product of the mechanical forces of nature? What is human knowledge? Has man a free will or is he constrained by necessity? Whence man's ideas of right and wrong, virtue and sin, good and evil, beautiful and ugly? Does he have these ideas as an individual or as a member of society? If he gains his value and significance as distinct from the animal only in society, what is the nature of society? Is it a spontaneous growth or is it the deliberate work of man? How does it change—by evolution or through upheaval and revolution? All these questions are the field of philosophical thought and speculation. Philosophy thus is not mere metaphysics. It also concerns itself with social questions involved in ethics, politics and aesthetics.

### 1. *Speculations on Society—Its Origin and Function*

Historically, human societies in their growth and development pass through a two-fold stage. The first is that of spontaneous and unconscious change and growth, partly the result of a vital inner urge of group-nature and partly due to changing external circumstances, including those of inter-group relations and conflicts. Generally, the inner urge and external circumstances act and react upon each other. In this first stage, there is as yet no conscious idea or effort at change and re-arrangement. In the



second, more advanced stage, change and growth is through deliberate and conscious effort. This may result from changing external circumstances or may be due to changed values, ideas and ideals. Generally the two processes are combined.

In India, after the first unconscious stage of tribal growth was passed, the ancient *Rishis*, who were not the world-shunning anchorites that they are popularly supposed to be, concerned themselves with social organisations and were advisers to kings and princes. They wrote and speculated about society and the state, their growth, development and decay. They produced books on *Dharma Shastra*—political theory and basic law and *Artha Shastra*—practical politics and administration. As early as the *Mahabharata*, there were speculations about the origin and nature of society and the state. In the *Shantiparvam* of the *Mahabharata*, Bhishma, the great sage-politician in answer to a question of King Yudhisthira describes how from the natural state of chaos and confusion, social order was created and state authority established. Bhishma says, in the beginning there was neither society nor ruler, neither law nor the criminal. In that state, the strong and the wicked abducted the wives of the weak, took away their carriages, clothes, ornaments, etc. People killed their parents, old men and guests, and good men were oppressed. There was no agriculture or commerce, no morality or *dharma*. To escape from this natural state, where the law of the strong prevailed, the sovereign authority of the ruler was created.

The natural state described in the *Mahabharata* is in all essentials the same as described later in Europe by Hobbes. Elsewhere there is also the Rousseauic conception of original uncorrupt human nature in the *Sātyayuga* (golden age) wherein man was good and neither government nor laws were necessary. Man fell from this grace in the *Kaliyug*, the present age and thus brought upon himself the necessary evil of the coercive state.

The ancient Hindu concept of society was that it is the field of human activity through which the individual can achieve his highest good. As the body physical, so the body social is the vehicle for his evolution and growth, through the well-recognised four-fold stage of *kama*, the satisfaction of desire, *artha*, the acquisition of material goods for the satisfaction of desire, *dharma*, the regulation of desire and worldly goods through social, moral, and ethical rules, to the final spiritual goal of *moksha*, liberation. The *Rishis* also systematised and codified the ancient customs,



usages and regulations giving the country a definite social and legal system.

In ancient Greece, too, the Greek philosophers along with their higher pursuits of metaphysics, speculated about society and the state. Philosopher-statesmen like Solon in Athens and Lycurgus in Sparta were entrusted with the task of framing the basic constitution of the city states. Whenever a new city was founded the task of framing its basic law, or constitution, was entrusted to a political sage. Greek philosophers also analysed existing social institutions and suggested desirable changes. Most of the Socratic-Platonic philosophy is woven around the idea of an ideal social order, the Republic. The Republic was not conceived by Plato as a utopia, but as a practical scheme, which given favourable conditions, could be realized. He tried to realize it through the Tyrant of Syracuse, whom he chose for the role of the ideal philosopher-king, depicted in the Republic. Political thought and speculation form an integral part of the philosophy of Aristotle.

In the Middle Ages, the Christian Fathers evolved their own theory of the state. They believed that "the powers that be are from God" and the Pope as the head of the Christian Church was the viceregent of God on earth. He was supreme in spiritual as well as in temporal matters. The power of the emperors and kings was ultimately derived from God through the Church. Therefore, must every emperor and king be anointed and consecrated by church dignitaries. This idea of the subordination of the temporal to spiritual authority, however, resulted in prolonged conflict between the two, which with varying fortunes led ultimately to their separation, paving the way to the present secular national state.

In modern times, too, every philosopher, from Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Voltaire, Rousseau, Marx up to the present day, have speculated about the origin and functions of society and the state, and the ideal social order which would work for the prosperity and progress of the individual and society.

## 2. Pre-Marxian Revolutions

Social change through revolution also finds place in the speculations of philosophers. However, before Marx, philosophy laid no claim to having made scientific study of social revolutions, their causes and working. Whenever philosophers advocated social change, they generally analysed existing institutions and politics

and recommended what they considered the best. They also created utopias, describing what an ideal society should be and how it should function. How the utopia of philosophical conception was to be established was rarely considered. This is because philosophers, except in rare instances, have not been active politicians or revolutionaries. There, is therefore, some justification for what Marx says that "Philosophers have merely interpreted the world in various ways. The real task is to alter it." However, with his desire to "alter the world", Marx could not act as the leader and guide of the revolutionary movements in Europe in 1848 and afterwards in 1871 in Paris.

In the past, revolutions generally were revolts which when successful affected political authority. The existing ruling person, clique or party was changed for a new one. Sometimes, revolutions rose out of local circumstances, having no far-reaching significance. We are told by Aristotle in his exposition of the "Constitution of Athens" that there were eleven revolutions in that city in a century and a half. These revolutions resulted in the establishment alternately of the traditional type of Greek tyranny and democracy. In ancient Rome, the rule of kings was changed into an aristocratic Republic. Again, after Caesar, the Republic was replaced by the Empire. These were not total revolutions. They were concerned merely with politics and political power. There was no desire or effort at changing the existing social order and replacing it with a new one.

In the Middle Ages in Europe there was much unrest owing to disturbed political conditions created by the power, tyranny and rapacity of the feudal barons and their mutual petty wars. To this was added the tyranny of the church. There were revolts of peasants inspired more by religious ideas of equality than by economic, political or social ideas. These peasant revolutions were generally drowned in blood.

In the beginning of modern times in Europe revolutionary movements were chiefly concerned with the consolidation of the power of kings against the feudal barons or with national liberation from foreign domination or the unification of small kingdoms into national states. In more recent times, before the Bolshevik revolution, they were concerned with specific popular grievances against kings, chiefly in connection with the power to impose taxes. But as these revolutions proceeded, they became struggles for the establishment of democracy. The English revolution in the days of Charles I began as a protest against his arbitrary authority to



impose taxes without consulting parliament. The conflict between king and parliament came to be mixed up with the desire of the Puritans to have not only freedom of worship but to impose their faith as a state religion. The American revolution too began on the question of the right of the mother country to tax the colonists without their consent and developed as a struggle to throw off the imperial rule of England and achieve national freedom and democracy. The French Revolution began with an effort to limit the power of the king and establish democracy.

Though these revolutions were against specific and definite grievances, those who took part in them stated their aims in spiritual, moral and idealistic terms. Only higher than mere material aims can call forth the sacrifices demanded by revolutionary movements. Therefore, the battle-cry of the pre-Marxian revolutions was Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. They theorised that man was born free and equal—he had certain natural and fundamental rights—governments were formed by the will of the people through some sort of explicit or implicit social contract, for the preservation of these rights—all just powers of the government are derived from the people—there must be rule of law—law must be made by the people or their representatives—governments must be subject to this law—taxation without representation is tyranny—people have an inherent right to cashier bad rulers. These were theoretical formulations. There was a wide gulf between theory and practice. Men were born free and equal but this freedom and equality did not cover the toiling masses or the coloured and the colonial people. Also the equality preached by these revolutionary movements did not include economic equality. At best it was equality of opportunity. The revolutionaries of the period had a naive and extravagant belief in the intelligence and ability of average men to improve their lot through their own effort, provided there was no interference from governments or any other organised authority. They of course knew that equality of opportunity will not result in mathematical equality, but all the same they thought that it will produce some equitable redistribution of worldly goods. Property, they believed, was the result of individual initiative, intelligence, industry and thrift. It was, therefore, sacred. Any forcible possession of it even for public purposes without due compensation would amount to confiscation and depriving the citizen of his inherent rights. It must be remembered that these liberal democratic theories were formed before the Industrial Revolution, which resulted in the capitalist

social order, giving enormous wealth and power to a few and reducing the many to the class of wage-earning proletariat. The pre-Marxian revolutions were pre-eminently political, seeking the transfer of political power from the hands of kings and princes to those of the representatives of the people. There was no conscious effort at revolutionising society. However, transference of political power to the people did ultimately work for some social and economic changes; but these were not consciously planned or worked for. Social revolution was more the work of the Industrial Revolution which ushered in the capitalist order. It also transferred political power to the rising middle class. Among the pre-Marxian political revolutions, there were some revolutionaries who believed not only in political freedom but also in social and economic equality. These were the Levellers, but their ideas were derived more from the Bible and the teachings of Christ than from any study of social and economic problems.

It was possible that the revolutions, that transferred political power from the kings to the people and established democracy, may have through an evolutionary process in course of time brought about some equitable distribution of economic goods through the vote, as has recently happened in some of the Western countries. But this process was arrested for the time being by the Industrial Revolution. The economic inequality that it introduced was not condemned but rather supported by the democratic and liberal thinkers and politicians. It is this that ultimately discredited liberalism and along with it democracy. Liberalism instead of using democracy for liquidating economic inequality became a powerful bulwark of private property, whatever its extent and however acquired. It did not realise that wide disparity in wealth, created by capitalist exploitation, ultimately adversely affects political liberty and equality before law and finally nullifies the free vote.

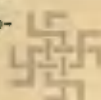
### 3. *Marx—the material basis of social change*

Pre-Bolshevik revolutions were not planned and designed. There was no philosophy or science of revolution. The social disequilibrium, created by the arbitrary authority and tyranny of kings and rulers, made the people to burst forth in blind fury. Such outbursts were generally put down. A revolution succeeded only when the general confusion created through the weakness or vacillation of authority was taken advantage of by some powerful individual or organised group that gave direction to the struggle.



Marx, however, claimed to have made a scientific analysis of society and discovered a method by which a successful revolution can be brought about. Like the earlier philosophers he did not merely interpret the world, but he wanted to change it. He tried to show how societies had changed in the past through revolution and how they could be today. According to his analysis the driving force in human history is man's relation to matter. The most important and significant relation which affects all other relations is economic. Fundamentally it is the mode of production and the ownership of the instruments of production that are the deciding factors in history and in revolutions. Both history and economics are exact sciences. "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of the class struggle", which is inevitable. It is even automatic. No will, divine or human, can deflect the course of history from its path to its predestined goal of a classless society. Man's freedom consists in his 'recognition of necessity'. Individuals can only help the historic process of change to a classless society, by becoming its instruments. "That end (classless society) can be attained only by the *forcible overthrow* of all existing social conditions." In the struggle "the proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have the whole world to gain." Further, Marx viewed all current moral standards as created by the ruling class, in his days by the capitalist class, for its own advantage. The proletarians can have no morality except that which helps them in their struggle and which benefits their cause. Therefore, there are no permanent standards of morality. It must change with the changing strategy of the revolutionary proletarian struggle against capitalism and the capitalist state. In short, all morality is class morality. What matters is the historical goal. The best and therefore the most moral means are those that will be effective in taking humanity to its predestined goal of a classless society wherein the state will fade away.

Whether all the array of evidence marshalled by Marx to prove his metaphysical, philosophical or scientific theory, as he would prefer to call it, is historically valid or not, it is certain that it presents a seemingly logical and consistent pattern, provided its basic assumptions are accepted. It is a well-rounded system. It has convinced and given satisfaction to many otherwise critical intellectuals who were disillusioned by democratic liberalism that supported and justified a social order built upon the exploitation of the many by the few and made a farce of morality and democracy. Moreover, a revolution that pro-



mises an ideal social order built upon justice and humanity has always attracted disinterested and sensitive intellectuals and philosophers. They, too, just like common men need to 'belong', need some emotional stability provided by a theory or creed. Of course they would not admit that they needed some sure basis of conduct but would think that the theory provided a certain intelligent and logical system. The philosopher Kant, when he heard of the fall of Bastille, old as he was, and having nothing to do with practical politics, was so transported with joy that he exclaimed in the words of Sameon in the New Testament: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace... For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The poet Wordsworth greeted the French Revolution with equal enthusiasm. He sang: "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, but to be young was very heaven." In more recent times, great writers and poets welcomed the Russian Revolution in like extravagant terms. Andre Gide wrote: "I would like to cry aloud my sympathy for the Soviet Union and hope that my cry might be heard and have effect. I would like to live long enough to witness the triumph of this tremendous effort which I hope from the bottom of my heart would succeed and for which I would like to work." Andre Gide lived 'long enough' but not to work for the new revolution but to be called a bourgeois reactionary and fascist writer, when after his visit to Russia he exposed some of the short-comings and extravagances of the Soviet regime! The certainty and security of a logical system and a dogma to reform the world saves people from the trouble of examining in detail complex and baffling social phenomena. This also explains why intellectuals in the West often turn to Catholicism. It gives them spiritual certainty and security which can only be found in an absolute and infallible system or dogma.

Let us, however, see what Marx exactly means by revolution. He holds that "forces of production" and "production relations" create contradictions leading to class conflict. "All history with the exception of its primitive stages was the history of class struggle," he says. "When the class conflict arises at a violent crisis, we have a revolution."

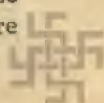
This we believe is an arbitrary narrowing of the conception of a revolution. Revolutions in history have been caused more by changed ideas, ideals and values, than by material causes. They have been the result of new awareness that social relations are not just and harmonious and that they can be made so through conscious effort, working to a goal. This will be plain from the fact that



often revolutions did not arise when and where material conditions were the worst. Rather they generally arose when material and economic conditions were improving. With the improvement of material conditions the ideas, hopes and aspirations of people changed. History does not record that King Charles I of England was a more arbitrary ruler than Henry VIII or Elizabeth. Nor is there evidence to prove that the material conditions in England of the masses were worse in the days of Charles I than in the days of Henry VIII. The revolution in the days of King Charles was the work of people who were inspired by new ideas in religion and a new conception of the role that Parliament, which was by no means a democratic body, should play in the governance of the country, especially in the matter of taxation. The position that the Puritan radicals wanted Parliament to occupy in the governance of England was never occupied by it in previous history. (The irony of it, though, was that when Cromwell became the master of the situation and absolute ruler he had no patience with Parliament and finally dispensed with it just as Lenin, 266 years later, did with the Duma.) Anyway, the ideas of people about religion and politics, two major aspects of life, had changed and hence the revolution.

In America too the same was true. There had been no change in the material condition of the colonists but in the ideas of the people—chiefly of the leaders of the people—about the position that the Mother Country should occupy in the governance of the colonies. Again, the French Revolution did not come about under the unmitigated tyranny of Louis XIV, but under Louis XVI, a mild, innocent and spineless monarch. However, during the interval between the two kings there had arisen in France a galaxy of writers and philosophers who roused among the people a new awareness and with it new hopes, aspirations and ambitions, through their radical ideas about the relationship that should exist between the individual and society, the state and the government and the rights of the people.

In Russia, the people would have been quite content with the introduction of liberal democracy under Kerensky, which Lenin himself declared had made Russia "the freest country in the world." The October Revolution was the result of Marxian ideas and ideology adopted by Lenin and his companions. Those who held these ideas were not destroying the tyranny of the Czars but were



destroying a popular democratic government for the formation of which they themselves had been as much responsible as any other radical group or party in Russia.

(Incidentally it may be pointed out that the success of the Revolution was chiefly due to the fact that the existing Authority was weak and vacillating and had lost its grip on the police and military forces. As long as Authority, however arbitrary and cruel, had its hold on the police and military forces of the country the revolutionaries remained either dormant or if they rose in revolt were crushed out of existence).

In Medieval Europe too, the revolutionary movements though they failed, were the result of religious ferment and revival and of sectarian movements. The ideas of poverty and equality preached by the Lollards, Hussites, John Wycliffe and others were derived from the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament and the communist living of primitive Christian societies. These lived up to the ideal of "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" more faithfully and literally than is the case with Soviet Russia today.

Our own Indian revolution was the result as much of ideas as of the adverse economic conditions created by foreign imperialist exploitation. In a country governed for centuries by arbitrary emperors, kings and rulers, native and foreign, the establishment of democracy is the triumph of the ideas of liberty and democracy that we imbibed through our contact with the West, however painful. The earlier revolution of 1857, miscalled the Mutiny—if it had succeeded—would have brought to the helm of affairs an Indian emperor, king or potentate. In 1947 nobody, not even the worst reactionary, could think in terms of personal rule of an emperor or king. The current pull of Socialism, which today is not only the aim of the leftist parties but is also the avowed aim of the party of *status quo* and even of the communalists, is due more to the propagation of ideas from the democratic West than to any deepening economic crisis in the country. It is also due to the ideas preached by Gandhiji about social justice and equality based upon truth and non-violence.

#### 4. *The Moral and Spiritual Factors*

How new values, ideas and ideologies arise is a different question. But revolutions, if they are not blind upsurges of people but conscious efforts at social change and reconstruction, are due more



to spiritual, moral and ideal causes than to deteriorating economic conditions. However, Marx tells us that all ideas are the product of social circumstances and it is these that create the consciousness of man. This is Marx's view. But Hegel, from whom he derived many of his ideas though he put them upside down, holds a contrary view. For Hegel, the Absolute is the Idea and from this Absolute evolves the whole material world and social arrangements have no reality in themselves apart from the Idea as the Absolute. We would not judge between master and pupil. All that common sense, which often is so uncommon, specially among philosophers, informs us is that ideas do not arise in a vacuum and that material conditions and ideas are interdependent and act and react upon each other. Which is first in the field is as difficult to decide as between the egg and the hen. But it is not with the origin of ideas that we are concerned here but with their worth, value and significance in a revolution. Man, we are assured, has been evolved out of the monkey. But his worth, value and significance are not decided by his fanciful, frolicsome and humble ancestry but by the functions he performs. Whatever be the origin of ideas and values they are at the back of every revolution as a conscious effort to bring about significant social change.

People may suffer and have suffered from poverty and other social ills through the centuries without rising in revolt. Poverty has been with us always. But there has not been therefore a perpetual revolution. It is only when the idea, that poverty is created by unjust man-made social conditions and is a remediable evil, is forcibly placed before the people by some moral, social or political reformer, that the oppressed have thought of rising in revolt against it. Untouchability existed in India for centuries. Its sanctity was recognised both by the higher-caste Hindus and those who suffered from its humiliating hardships. But it is only when a reformer like Gandhiji put before the people the idea that not only was it unjust and inhuman, but sinful to consider fellow human beings as untouchables, that a movement was started against it, both by those who benefited by it and those who were its victims. The removal of untouchability from Indian life is a great revolution. Yet the untouchables were not motivated by purely economic considerations. They were moved by new moral ideas of human justice and dignity. The higher classes, too, in abandoning this system, which gave some of them economic advantages, were moved not by economic but by moral considerations.

We have said that revolutionary movements are the result mainly of changed ideas and values. Such changes may be due to many causes. The causes are as various as the principal urges of life. A revolutionary movement may arise from the overmastering passion of an individual to solve the riddle of life and achieve salvation. It would be absurd to say that the search of Buddha for enlightenment or of Christ to attain the Kingdom of God or the desire on the part of Mahomed, the Prophet, to reach Heaven did not initiate great revolutionary movements! They produced new values, new philosophies, science, learning and arts. New political and social ideas were born out of the movements initiated by these exceptional religious geniuses. New kingdoms and empires rose as a result of the impetus to life that their teachings gave. There is not a phase of human life that was not powerfully affected by these religious movements. Luther and Calvin in modern times by their revolt against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church produced profound revolutionary changes that powerfully affected all spheres of life.

Revolutions may arise from the revival and spread of knowledge as in the case of Renaissance. It began with the discovery of old Greek contributions to philosophy and knowledge. But it did not stop here. It gave a powerful impetus to research in all spheres of knowledge including the physical sciences. Science in the modern world has revolutionised the entire human life of individuals and communities. Renaissance exercised a powerful influence on culture. The present day ideas of humanism with social justice and equality can be directly derived from this purely intellectual movement. It also gave a powerful impetus to political democracy. It paved the way to Socialism.

The geographical discoveries and the new sea routes have wrought in modern life a great revolution even though there was no conscious effort, by those who participated in these discoveries, at changing the social order. They could not have conceived the changes that have taken place as the result of their curiosity and adventure. In more modern times, scientific research, resulting in the manufacture of nuclear weapons of warfare has already wrought a profound change in the thinking of men and nations. Revolutionary changes are sure to come hereafter. The use of nuclear weapons of war may destroy world civilisation or frighten nations to create an atmosphere of peace and co-operation. Both will be tremendous revolutions in human history produced not purely by economic struggles between classes but by advancing science and technology, applied to modern warfare.



In early human history revolutionary changes were the result of the movements of people, not only for economic reasons in search of fresh fields and pastures new but because of the exuberance of the life spirit resulting in adventure. Foreign conquest has often brought about profound social changes both in the life of the conquerors and the conquered. The Muslim conquest and later the British conquest of India brought about profound social changes. The Imperial expansion of ancient Rome not only powerfully affected the social life of the Greek and other conquered nationalities but the life of Rome itself. So also, the conquering incursions of the Teutonic tribes produced far-reaching changes in Western Europe. These incursions were not undertaken purely or even mainly for economic gain but were undertaken in search of military adventure, glory, conquest and domination. To assign purely economic causes to revolutions is neither historical nor scientific. Revolutions are movements of the human spirit in no narrow, partial or sectarian sense but in its wide comprehensive sweep, affecting some fundamental aspects of individual and collective life.

### 5. *The hazards of violent revolution*

In human history there are periods of advance and progress and periods of stagnation and regress. All these cannot be explained by a single economic cause or motive. Nor again can revolution be confused with sudden violent risings and upheavals. These are only the outward manifestations of anger and hate against conditions of social disequilibrium which make life difficult for large sections of the population. We may not forget that violent revolutions are merely destructive and negative. If social relations are to be harmonised and equilibrium established, it cannot be done merely by the forcible enthronement of a pre-conceived theoretical abstract conception of what a just social order should be. The work of reconstruction can be undertaken only when revolutionary emotions and passions have to a certain extent subsided and the sway of reason asserted, through hard labour put forth in a scientific spirit of trial, error and correction, not hampered too much by pre-conceived utopian theories about the end to be achieved. It is not the violent upheaval that as by magic produces the ideal state and establishes a new culture. It has to be worked not through years but decades of hard, honest and co-operative work and effort. After all, a violent revolution is a violent break with past civilisation and culture. Building up a new culture can only be a slow process. New values have to be created and applied, new customs

and conventions and manners and modes of thought and action have to be evolved.

The first condition of this long process is the re-establishment of peace and security which have been disturbed by the violence of the revolution. It is, therefore, not only illogical but stupid to raise the slogan "Long Live the Revolution." Perpetual revolution would mean perpetual confusion and chaos wherein nothing can be built. Temporary confusion is justified only when it leads to creative effort. Otherwise, it becomes wanton destruction of which people soon tire and in despair cry for peace and security at any price under any authority, however dictatorial and totalitarian. It may be even a worse tyranny than the one displaced by the revolution. It is characteristic of violent revolutions that they soon produce reaction. In spite of their high promises of a just and equitable social order they become instrumental in establishing the absolute rule of a dictator or of a coterie of ambitious and unscrupulous politicians. The common people who formerly rent the skies with cries, of "Victory to the Revolution" now as vociferously cry "Victory" to the Dictator or the coterie of politicians who have succeeded in re-establishing peace and security. Common people are always in a hurry to go about their peaceful avocations, which are interrupted by prolonged upheavals, and the violent quarrels and wranglings of political theorists who aspire to mould the new social order. In history violent upheavals and revolutions have led not to the expansion of liberty but to its suspension while they last and its suppression at the hands of dictators afterwards. This is what happened to the violent English revolution of 1640s. It installed in power Cromwell. It was fortunate for English liberty that he had no like successor in his son or in any of his generals. The result of the French revolution was Napoleon and the Empire. The Russian revolution resulted in the nominal dictatorship of the party and the proletariat but the real dictatorship of Lenin and Stalin. Today, this dictatorship of an individual is replaced by that of a self-perpetuating junta of powerful politicians, any one of whom may play the role of Stalin if he has the requisite character and ruthlessness and if he gets appropriate opportunities.

Violent revolutions are the result of hopes long deferred and aspirations ruthlessly suppressed. After the violent upheaval has started what rules uppermost is hate and the desire for revenge, which in their march, as in war, make little distinction between friend and foe and the neutral. Even the supporter who lacks the required destructive and fanatical zeal becomes an enemy. No

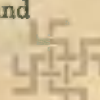


difference is made between the system and those who work it. Many of the innocent people who on account of their past environment and training or for economic reasons have no other choice but to work under a cruel and unjust system are all considered as enemies to be destroyed.

Further, when hate and violence have undermined established authority, revolutionary forces are often recruited from the ranks of unscrupulous politicians and the anti-social elements. Political *Thugs* and *Pindaris* come to the forefront. That they come to the forefront has been admitted by those in power in Russia today. In this connection the recent utterances of Kruschew are revealing. Unscrupulous, cruel and sadistic leaders complete the destructive work begun by a popular upheaval. These elements ultimately drive away the reformers and the idealists. Naturally they bring to the service of the good cause they espouse their anti-social standards of conduct and ethics.

Hate and violence when opposed lead to distrust, suspicion and fear. Persons in the grip of fear are capable not only of losing their heads but indulging in any kind of cruelty that would afford real or fancied safety. Suspicion and fear are natural to a violent revolution. Generally the revolutionary has worked underground and through conspiratorial methods. Here the secret agents of the powers that be masquerading as the friends of the cause, have tried to sabotage revolutionary activity. Under these circumstances it is not easy to distinguish friend from foe. The revolutionary, therefore, works constantly under a double strain of contrary emotions, love and trust for those who work with him as comrades for a cause he considers sacred, and of suspicion and distrust for the very same people.

A violent revolution always assumes the character of a civil war where members of the same family may be ranged on opposite sides ready to suspect and hate each other and cut each other's throats. Under such circumstances human considerations of love, sympathy, fellow feeling, pity or giving anybody the benefit of the doubt would be considered unworthy weakness or the emotional shrinking from one's plain duty. Revolutionaries give no quarter to those whom they consider as their enemies even as they expect none. It is, therefore, no wonder that very often revolutions swallow up their own progenitors, many of those who initiated the struggle from high motives of establishing a free, just and humane social order.



The revolutionary believes that he has seen the light and perceived the truth. He, therefore, considers himself all-wise and becomes a fanatic, lacking humility. He is never assailed by doubts. In his spectrum there are no more than two colours, white and black. He sincerely believes that those who are not with him are against him. He, therefore, where he cannot get conformity enforces it through the secret chamber, physical and psychological torture, concentration camp, the guillotine and the firing squad. When the revolutionary uses violence he thinks that it is necessary for the success of his sacred cause. He computes the loss of liberty and life of a few with the happiness of the many living and yet unborn. The stakes are too high and too sacred for any risks to be taken. It is not ephemeral men and women who count but the cause. He knows that his motives are pure and unselfish and meant for the good of others and therefore are moral. This sense of self-righteousness is strengthened by the risks he takes and the sacrifices he makes. He forgets that many of those who defend the old order very often show as much courage and undergo similar sacrifices, have equally disinterested motives and high aims. They too believe like him in their side and cause. In the last war, the Japanese soldiers fought with greater suicidal courage than the soldiers of democracy or the new totalitarian dispensation in Russia. Was, therefore, the cause of the Japanese more sacred than that of the Allies?

Again, the revolutionary thinks of men in the mass. The masses are undifferentiated. They care neither for liberty nor culture. Their needs are more material. They would prefer security to freedom. Civilization and culture are the results of the effort and work of exceptional and gifted individuals. Masses never made discoveries in fields of knowledge, science or art. Of course, if a culture is to live and prosper, the masses must participate in it. Revolutions occur in a moribund society. The causes of this may be extraneous to the culture that is sought to be destroyed by the revolution. Rather the causes that produce social disequilibrium may be inimical to culture. To take a recent example, the Orthodox Church in Russia was not helping Christian values and culture. It was rather destroying them. What the revolutionary should have done was just to remove hindrances in the way of working of Christian values and culture, that were being perverted by the organised Church and the worship of the Little Father, the Czar. The remedy was not the destruction of Christian values and religion. The same is the case with many other institutions, such as the family, marriage, etc. A genuine





revolution must not destroy a culture but must destroy the overgrowth of weeds that smother it. It must try to remove the hindrances in the way of the free and unhampered activity of individuals, classes and communities so long as this is not antisocial. It is only when the hindrances are removed that a culture and civilisation can function in freedom, which is its very breath. However, violent revolutions have the habit of sweeping away an entire phase of a culture, its good points with the bad. The result is that much of what is destroyed by revolutionary frenzy has to be painfully rebuilt when peace and sanity have been restored.

This is powerfully illustrated by the Russian Revolution. Institutions of religion, marriage, family and inequalities in emoluments, competition, rank, titles, decorations, etc., have been restored. Women are no more encouraged to work in factories. They are induced to go back to their homes from where they were recently taken out. Inequalities of income in spite of the instruments of production being in the hands of the state are more glaring than in industrially advanced countries in the West under the capitalist system. Wisdom dawns on a violent revolution rather late, after it has smashed in anger and hate what was most valuable in life along with what was bad and outworn.

From all that has been said above, it must not be concluded that the old cruel and unjust order must be tolerated and that revolutions are an unmitigated evil, the invasion of barbarism on freedom, civilisation and culture. We must admit that in society circumstances may arise when nothing short of a violent revolution would loosen the bonds of tyranny and make movement and progress possible. Social, economic and political conditions may be so rotten and the holders of power so foolish and obstinate and cruel that any effort at reasonable solution is made impossible. The old order may be so hopeless and out of date and out of the spirit of the times and may be in such a state of decay and disintegration that no smooth peaceful and evolutionary process of change can reform it. It is at such times that revolutionary violence like the surgeon's knife is called for. But the surgeon's knife kept in the body too long may destroy the patient along with the disease.

Take the instance of France and Russia. Revolutions burst forth in these countries because those in power were not only reactionary but also stupid. They represented a decadent class immersed in vice and luxury. With all that they were thoroughly weak and incompetent. These conditions made a violent revolution inevitable. But that certainly was not the case in Russia

when the October revolution was carried out by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. It was a revolt against a democratic authority in the establishment of which the Bolshevik Party had co-operated. It was quite possible as in some other countries in Europe that the liberal democracy established under Kerensky would have changed by an evolutionary process to democratic socialism through the combined efforts of the vote and a free trade union movement. There was no need to destroy the Kerensky government through a violent revolt. It was not a tyranny to be swept away. Not satisfied with this, the Communist parties in other countries in Europe instructed by Russia, instead of combining with social democratic forces, helped the Fascist and the Nazis to power and domination. In Germany they were responsible for weakening the party of social democrats, paving the way for the rise of Hitler. Again, it was the Bolshevik alliance with Hitler that emboldened him to challenge Western democracies. But people fired by revolutionary hate and utopian dreams of an ideal society often lose their perspective so that they cease to distinguish right from wrong. Moreover, they forget that violence, even under exceptional circumstances, is a necessary evil, which must come to an end as soon as possible, allowing normal conditions to prevail. If this is to be done, revolutionaries must put certain restraints on their conduct. Only these restraints can turn a revolution into an instrument of freedom and culture.

#### 6. *Dogmatic approach destructive of freedom and culture*

What then is fundamentally wrong with violent revolutionaries? They have so far been inspired by theories and ideologies. Theories, even when facts are not twisted to uphold them, are built upon an interpretation of past and current experience. Some of the facts and material that may modify a theory are yet in the womb of the future. Therefore, there is no inevitable truth about a theory. If a revolution is built merely on a particular theory, another revolution, when a new and different theory is enunciated, claiming to be based upon facts as then known and interpreted, becomes inevitable. In these days when knowledge is on the increase in all directions, theories keep changing and racing each other. If a revolution is to be based on theories it will have to be a perpetual or permanent revolution, leaving little opportunity for the growth and development of culture.

Theories and ideologies being finite and fallible, if they are to build up a culture, must work under the guiding principles of



moral values that are at the root of all civilization of any variety. Theory can give us a school of thought or a dogma. The cruel excesses, the reigns of terror, the Russian trials and confessions and concentration camps are all due to the logic of a theory, freed from the regulating limitations and restraints imposed upon human action by the guiding principles of certain fundamental moral values. If these are absent there remains no measure to guide or judge human action or conduct, except that of success. This ultimately means the will of the strong individual, group or party. It would lead to the subordination of means to ends. When this happens there is no standard of judgment left. Anybody who stands or is supposed to stand in the way of success, as conceived by those in power, is an enemy, a saboteur and a fifth-columnist. Even a person who is doing his little bit in the social field to relieve human suffering becomes an enemy. He is a reactionary. He puts back the hand of the clock by his effort to mitigate human misery, thus making a cruel and corrupt social order a little more bearable. It is not the good will of individuals that counts but the result of their external actions, measured by the men who have succeeded in getting possession of the key to the new social Heaven. It is conveniently forgotten that means have their effect not only on the end in view but upon human agents who use those means. If the means are evil the ends will be evil and the agents working will sooner or later be affected in their character by the evil means they consciously and constantly use. As a matter of fact morality is concerned more with means than ends. There is often great agreement about ends. Ends automatically result from the means used. The controversy always centres round means. How can cruel and censorious control and regimentation bring about freedom? Freedom grows in an atmosphere of free thought and expression. How can hate generate love? How can blood and murder not only of enemies but of old comrades, who have worked for the cause, bring about friendship, trust, good understanding and peace? Those who believe in such an alchemy are not scientific thinkers but counter-revolutionary quacks.

Another significant factor that violent revolutionaries forget is that power though necessary is a dangerous instrument. It is no end in itself. It is only a means. It can be used for good as for evil purposes. The capitalist exploits because he has power. The slave-driver works his will because he has power. How is this weapon of power to be controlled or properly used? The taming of power cannot take place automatically. Proper measures have

to be taken and safeguards provided. As a matter of fact the greatest task of democracy has been that of taming power. It has done it by providing individuals with certain fundamental rights which are protected even against the executive power of the government. Then it has devised certain checks and balances by which no one department of government may become so supreme and totalitarian as to threaten the free functioning of other departments in their respective orbits. The universal secret vote, periodical elections and the party system are other ways of taming power. It is perhaps this danger of power that made Marx say that after establishment of a classless society, the state will fade away. The state is the embodiment of power. Today in Russia the state if anything has become all-powerful and pervasive. There are no fundamental rights which can be asserted against those in power. There are no checks and balances. There are no parties, no free elections. Even more dangerous than the state is the power of the dictatorship. It would be easier for the state to fade away than for a dictatorship to fade away. For anybody to think that the dictatorship in Russia will automatically fade away is a day-dream. Dictatorship is a more dangerous institution than capitalist democracy. In these days when dictatorship is not hereditary, the holders of power do not become weak, effete and degenerate as did hereditary kings and princes. Before a dictatorship gives up its power there will have to be another bloody revolution with uncertain possibilities. It needed World War II to destroy the dictatorship of Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese junkers and war-lords. In history no power has ever abdicated automatically and of its own free will. It is, therefore, the way of wisdom to see that precautionary measures are taken by those who initiate revolutionary movements that absolute power does not develop in a single coterie, group, party, institution or person. The concentration of increasing power in a set of ever diminishing individuals as is the case with a dictatorship is most dangerous. Power like poison can be digested only in small and regulated doses.

### 7. *Technique of non-violent revolution*

The discussion naturally leads us to a study of our own recent revolutionary movement under Gandhiji's leadership. The British imperial rule in India was cruel and tyrannical. It led to the moral and material degeneration of the people. By its economic exploitation it had reduced the mass of the population to chronic poverty



and its consequences—ignorance and disease. It was an unmitigated evil. Gandhiji was constrained to call it "satanic". It was rightly felt that there could be no prosperity or progress in any direction of national life unless the hindrance of foreign domination was removed and a people's government formed. How was it to be removed? It could not be done through prayer, petition and protest. Nor could it be removed through constitutional means, for India had no constitution by which the elected representatives of the people could displace the foreign government and form a popular one. It could only be done through direct revolutionary action. But Gandhiji conceived this revolution in terms of non-violence. This would avoid the danger and pitfalls of a violent revolution.

Gandhiji, in pursuance of his new ideas, elaborated a technique of non-violent non-cooperation or satyagraha as he called it. But he was not thinking only in terms of national and political liberty. On the basis of political independence he wanted to build a new social order based upon political liberty and economic and social equality free from exploitation. However, he did not enunciate a rigid theory, dogma or ideology for this double revolution. He, of course, indicated in rough outline the new social order he contemplated for India, but for the rest he laid down certain basic moral principles which were to guide revolutionary zeal and action. These moral principles are truth and non-violence.

A revolution based upon truth and non-violence, if true to its principles, cannot subordinate means to ends. Gandhiji therefore insisted upon purity of means. He held that the success that is achieved by using doubtful means is no real success. In the end it turns to bitter fruit. For him liberty achieved through violence would be no liberty. It would ultimately enslave the people. One must have faith that no evil can befall those who use moral means to achieve their high ends. By adherence to truth and non-violence Gandhiji saved the Indian revolutionary struggle from the wanton cruelty and bloodshed that has characterised violent revolutions in history.

How does non-violent revolution work? For this Gandhiji suggested the strategy of non-cooperation or civil disobedience. He held that the foreign domination in India was made possible through Indian co-operation. If this co-operation is withdrawn it would not be able to function. In this new revolutionary technique



suggested by Gandhiji there could be no place for secret conspiratorial activity. This eliminates fear of the saboteur and fifth columnist, real or fancied, who have to be eliminated through violence. This makes for confidence and trust among colleagues and comrades in the movement. There are no temptations for betrayal for any consideration simply because there are no secrets to betray. Everything is open and above board.

Gandhiji, as we have said, had no rigid revolutionary theory, dogma or ideology which he had been commissioned by God or history to work out for the benefit of mankind. He therefore did not consider himself infallible. As a human being he held he was liable to make mistakes. He was therefore full of humility. Whenever he realised that he had made a mistake he freely admitted it and made ample amends. He insisted upon his colleagues and co-workers to do likewise. In his own case he even exaggerated his shortcomings, which others could not see. He did not consider that those who differed from him were his enemies. He approved every man and woman of goodwill however they may differ from him. All those who in any way tried to alleviate human poverty, misery and suffering were serving the good cause, each according to the light vouchsafed to him. He considered them as fellow travellers. He was therefore not only willing to take counsel with those who differed from him but benefit by their advice and experience. Except for his basic principles of truth and non-violence he was always ready for compromise. He was therefore patient with those who differed from him.

Above all, he distinguished an evil system from the men who, whether willingly or through force of circumstances, are obliged to work it or serve under it. He says: "Our non-cooperation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our non-cooperation is with the system the English have established with the material civilisation and its attendant greed and the exploitation of the weak." Therefore, while Gandhiji hated an evil system and was impatient to destroy it he did not hate human beings who were responsible for its working. He did not want to destroy them, he wanted them to realise their error and tried to work for their conversion.

Gandhiji was no worshipper of power. He was suspicious of it. He says: "To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every



department of life." Again, he says: "I look upon the increase of power of the State with the greatest fear, because, although apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind, by destroying individuality which is at the root of all progress . . . . The individual has a soul but the State is a soulless machine."

Gandhiji was therefore a great believer in democracy. He approved of all the safeguards against the centralisation of power, whether in the hands of an individual, a coterie or a single organ of the government. These safeguards were, as we have said, the recognition of fundamental rights, separation of powers, providing necessary checks and balances between the different organs of the government, universal adult vote, periodical elections. To these he added his original ideas. One of these was that there must be one set of political workers engaged in the task of governance and another engaged in more or less voluntary philanthropic service. The leadership of the latter must rest in the hands of individuals as eminent as those working in the narrow political field. Therefore, as soon as national independence was achieved, he advised the leaders who had gone into the government not to make the congress organisation which was a national organisation serve the purposes of a political party but to turn it, as an organ of voluntary service, into a Lok Sevak Sangh. For political purposes the leaders could form separate political parties. Even earlier, when the names for the provisional government were being selected by the Congress Working Committee, Gandhiji's advice was that while Shri Jawaharlal should head the new government Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel should head the Congress. His advice could not be followed because Shri Jawaharlal did not feel that unaided by the Sardar he could shoulder the new responsibilities.

Another thing that Gandhiji had put before the nation for years to check the growing power of the state was his proposal to break it up. In accordance with the genius of his people and their democratic traditions he wanted the revival of the old village self-government through elected panchayats. Each village or a convenient urban area was to be a kind of semi-independent republic, discharging all the functions of local self-government, including the administration of local justice and keeping the peace. The central government was to perform functions of an all-India concern and of co-ordinating the work of self-governing local units. If such a scheme had been adopted and worked out in the last

few years after independence much of the bad blood created today over the controversies let loose by the S.R.C. Report might have been avoided. If each urban area managed most of the functions of the government the language and the minority questions would not have loomed so large as they do today.

Gandhiji knew the intimate relations between economics and politics. He understood that devolution of political power could not be possible or effective without decentralised industry. An impoverished village living merely on agriculture could not be a centre of light and life, justifying a semi-independent status. Gandhiji, therefore, placed before the nation his scheme of decentralised industry, making cloth production as its centre.

If we look at the development of democracy in the West, we find, to begin with a vigorous local self-government. This lost its vigour because of the centralising influence of capitalist industry. As a cure we have the Communist conception where political and economic power are concentrated in a totalitarian dictatorship of the one or the few. Gandhiji's scheme of decentralised industry combined with devolution of political power saves us from the perils of concentration of power as in capitalist democracy or Communist totalitarianism.

Further, Gandhiji did not conceive, like Marx, of a total revolution. He did not believe that all moral values, customs, laws and institutions, including the family, the church and the state were bourgeois creations devised by the capitalist class to serve their class interest. Every institution was to be judged on its merits. The part that had overgrown its utility, in terms of service to the masses, must be eliminated. No institution that could be reformed need be destroyed. All institutions are not of fortuitous growth or designed by evil persons for their own selfish ends. Many of them performed some social purpose. If they have ceased to perform that purpose they must be reformed and again made the vehicles of social purpose under the altered circumstances of today. Only such as are absolutely evil must be eliminated. For instance, Gandhiji did not reject Hinduism because it seemed to sanction the cruel and inhuman custom of untouchability. This must be abolished without abolishing the Hindu religion based upon the high philosophy of the Upanishads and the Gita. Gandhiji did not want to make a clean sweep of a whole phase of human culture as evil. He did not want to destroy this "sorry scheme of things en-

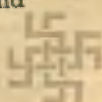


ture and rebuild it to our heart's desire" as was Communist attempt whose result was that after needless destruction, involving the lives and happiness of millions of people, they had to reintroduce not only many of the good institutions of the past but along with them some of its evils, as jingoist nationalism and imperial expansion.

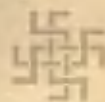
#### 8. *Peace, a pre-condition for progress*

While this is the case with violent revolutions in history those revolutions that have been non-violent have, without creating confusion, advanced human values and culture. We have talked of religious movements as also the stupendous revolution initiated by the Renaissance in Europe. The effects of these revolutions have not yet been exhausted. The whole of humanity has benefited by them. The truth of the matter is—more of violence, less of real revolution.

I have given only a brief account of the new non-violent technique of revolution and reconstruction as conceived by Gandhiji. We have seen how violent revolutions when successful have generally resulted in creating totalitarian regimes, destructive of freedom and culture. It is only afterwards, when peace has been re-established, that the work of building a new culture through an evolutionary process begins. But when that is undertaken many of the old values and institutions have to be revived and recreated. Would it not, therefore, be the path of wisdom for humanity to beware of the hazards of a violent revolution and try the Gandhian way? Except a few fanatics nobody would deny that Indian independence movement was a revolutionary movement. But because it was conducted mainly through non-violence, the destruction of life and property was the least. The hatred generated was also the least. There are few wounds left to heal. The foreigner as an imperialist has departed from India in peace and there is much goodwill between India and England. Social institutions and the life of the people have not been disorganised. Now that the hindrance of foreign rule has disappeared, if we are faithful to the basic values of truth and non-violence that Gandhiji placed before the nation and through it before the whole of humanity and if we follow in the main the schemes of social reconstruction that he suggested in the light of these values, all would be well with us. After all, his guidance has yielded high dividends. It has made the country, newly freed from centuries of slavery, to hold up its head and occupy an honourable place in the councils of free nations.



**Part III**  
**SELECTED PAPERS**





# The Notion of Objectivity

by

S. C. CHATTERJEE

Calcutta University

The status of the object of knowledge or the nature of objectivity has been a bone of contention among philosophers of the world from very old times. The problem of objectivity has become rather acute ever since the system of subjective idealism was propounded by Bishop Berkeley in the West and the Yogācāra Buddhists in the East. To the subjective idealists, the objects of knowledge are only ideas in the mind of the perceiving or the thinking subject and have no independent existence of their own outside the mind. This view, however, seems to violate our common-sense belief in the independent existence of all objects. It is also vehemently opposed not only by the old school of common-sense realism, but by all schools of modern realism like neo-realism and critical realism. The idealistic thinkers, on the other hand, contend that the objects of knowledge and even the system of physical nature depend for their existence on relation to some experience or mind. Hence it is worthwhile to consider critically the status that objects of knowledge should be given in philosophy.

It may be noted at the outset that all that we call an object must be *ipso facto* non-mental and exist independently of the mind. When a person thinks about his ideas or emotions, these become as good objects of his knowledge as any physical thing. When we discuss motive and intention as possible objects of moral judgment, they become objects of our knowledge. But from this we cannot say that ideas, emotions, motives, intentions and the like are extra-mental entities which exist apart from some experience or mind. Hence we cannot accept the realistic contention that all objects of knowledge are non-mental entities and are independent of the mind.

A realistic thinker like the late Samuel Alexander<sup>1</sup> does indeed hold that whatever is contemplated by the mind is distinct

1. Vide his *Space, Time and Deity*, Vol. I, pp. 12 ff.



from the mind and in that sense independent of the mind. Ideas, thoughts, images, etc., as contemplated by the mind, are all non-mental entities which are independent of the mind. On the other hand, the mental acts involved in them, namely, ideating, thinking, imagining, etc. are not contemplated but enjoyed by the mind and as such are truly mental. But we are to observe here that ideas, thoughts, images, etc., are not, as Alexander himself admits, physical things. If so, we are to say that they are neither physical nor mental, but neutral entities. But this view is obviously contradicted by our immediate experience which testifies that they are contents of the mind itself and are distinct and different from physical things. Further, the enjoying consciousness that, Alexander believes, we have of the mental acts either does or does not amount to a *knowledge* of them. If it does, then the mental acts become objects of knowledge and, on Alexander's view, would cease to be mental. On the other hand, if it does not, we are at a loss to understand how it is possible for us, as Alexander holds, to report anything about them. 'To introspect a mental state', he says, 'is not to contemplate it as an object, but merely to experience it and report more definitely the condition of enjoyment.'<sup>2</sup> But what we can definitely report on must be definitely known by us. Hence mental acts, like mental states, may become objects of knowledge and yet not cease to be mental.

If all the objects of knowledge cannot be said to be non-mental and to exist independently of the mind, they cannot be regarded as mere ideas of the mind either. Among idealistic thinkers, it is only the subjective idealists who may be said to hold the view that all objects of knowledge are ideas in some mind, which are wrongly taken for external realities. Some realistic philosophers like Bertrand Russell and G. E. More, however, accuse all idealists of committing the mistake of reducing all objects of knowledge to ideas of some mind, either the mind of God or the collective mind of the universe. Russell states the general idealistic argument thus: "Whatever can be thought of is an idea in the mind of the person thinking of it; therefore nothing can be thought of except ideas in minds; therefore anything else is inconceivable, and what is inconceivable cannot exist."<sup>3</sup> So also Moore thinks that Berkeley's famous proposition, "*esse is percipi*" 'is a necessary step in

2. *Loc. cit.*, pp. 17 ff.

3. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 21.



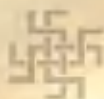


all arguments, properly to be called Idealistic, and in all arguments hitherto offered for the Idealistic conclusion'. The necessary conclusion to which, according to Moore, such arguments lead is that 'whatever is, is experienced'; and this, he thinks, is equivalent to saying that 'whatever is, is something mental.'<sup>4</sup> The American neo-realists also find in the philosophy of Kant and the Post-Kantian idealists a revival of the subjective idealism of Berkeley in a different form, and therefore consider it to be equally guilty of the charge of reducing objects of knowledge to ideas of the mind.

The realistic statement of the idealistic position seems to be hardly correct and fair. It fails to do justice to certain types of objective idealism, especially the Hegelian in the West and the Vedāntic in the East. These systems of idealism hold the view that the objects of knowledge, including physical things, cannot exist apart from some experience or mind. Kant's critical philosophy also may be called idealistic in so far as it holds the same view with regard to physical objects and the whole of nature. But to say that objects cannot exist apart from relation to some mind is not necessarily to reduce them to ideas of the mind. The proposition, 'objects cannot exist apart from some mind' is neither equivalent to, nor does it logically lead to, the other proposition, 'objects are ideas in some mind.' Kantian idealism believes in a world of independent things-in-themselves, which forms the basis and the core of our experience of objects. While the objects of experience can not come into existence *as objects* unless there is some active experiencing mind to synthesise and categorise the unorganised and unobjectified sense-manifold, there can be no opportunity for experiencing them unless certain influences come from the transcendent world of things-in-themselves and stimulate our sensibility and understanding. Ideas, however, need not wait for such an opportunity, in order to arise in one's mind. Hence we are to admit that, for Kant, the objects of experience are not mere ideas in our mind.

The idealism of Hegel and his followers can hardly be accused of reducing the objects of knowledge to ideas of any mind, human or divine. One of the fundamental principles on which their idealism is based is the correlativity between subject and object, mind and the world. For them, if there can be no object apart from the subject, there can also be no subject apart from relation to some

4. G. E. Moore, *Philosophical Studies*, pp. 5-6.



object. To reduce the object to the subject or an idea or state of the subject is to destroy the subject, or at least to undermine the concrete reality of the subject. The absolute as Idea or Subject realises itself as self-conscious spirit in and through its relation to a real world of objects. The world of objects has, therefore, a real existence as related to the absolute mind or spirit.

The different schools of Vedānta in India—Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita and the rest—are idealistic in the sense that they take one, absolute spiritual Being called Brahman as the ultimate reality, the independent cause of the world. Individual selves are regarded as either identical with Brahman or as parts or manifestations of Brahman and completely dependent on it. None of these idealistic systems has reduced the objects of the world to ideas of the individual or the absolute self. The reality of the material world and its objects has been unequivocally recognised in all the Vaiṣṇava schools of the Vedānta like the Dvaita and the Viśiṣṭādvaita, although it has been held to be relative to and dependent on Brahman. Even the Advaita Vedānta with its doctrine of Māyā does not countenance subjective idealism. Māyā is the indescribable power of Brahman to cause the appearance of a world of objects. The world of objects as the manifestation of the power of māyā cannot be regarded as unreal and fictitious or as mere dream. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the Vedānta-sūtra<sup>5</sup> severely criticises and repudiates the Yogācāra view that the objects of the world are ideas in our mind. External objects cannot be said to be utterly unreal and non-existent, because they are actually perceived by us, and what is absolutely unreal and non-existent like the hare's horn cannot even appear and be perceived by us. Nor are they like dream-objects, mere ideas or fancies of the mind; for while these are contradicted by our waking experience, the objects of our waking, normal experience are not so contradicted. Hence for Advaita Vedānta the objects of the world have an existence which differentiates them from mere ideas of the mind, although it is not describable as either real or unreal.

From what we have stated above it would appear that for objective idealism the objects of knowledge, including physical things, exist only as related to some experience or mind. They cannot exist apart from all relation to knowledge or experience.

5. Vide Śaṅkara's commentary on Vedānta-sūtra, 2. 2. 28-29.





So it is held by the idealists that all objects or things must somehow be known and we cannot find out anything which is not so known by us. Some American neo-realists like Perry detect in this idealist view the fallacy of argument from the ego-centric predicament. They think that while there is a genuine difficulty or even an impossibility of *finding* anything that is not known or centred in the ego, it is wrong to conclude from this that all things are known. This conclusion is based on the method of agreement unsupported by the method of difference and is therefore invalid. We cannot argue that because all objects or things which one *finds* are known, therefore all objects or things must be known, unless it can be shown that what is not known is not an object or thing. All that we can legitimately infer from the proposition 'all things which are found by us are known' is that 'all known things are known', and not that 'all things are known', nor that what is not known is not and cannot be a thing. The latter conclusion would be a generalisation by simple enumeration which cannot give us a valid universal proposition. The idealistic view that all things are known, or that a thing cannot exist unless it is known is a fallacious conclusion based on simple enumeration.

Now we are to observe that the idealistic view that objects or things cannot exist apart from some experience or knowledge is not based on so weak and uncertain grounds as generalisation by simple enumeration or definition by initial predication as alleged by the neo-realists. It is not true that the idealists argue that because some objects are known, therefore all objects are known. Nor is it true to say that they make 'relation to mind or knowledge' the defining character of things, only because from the epistemological standpoint we first judge things to be related to knowledge. That this is not really the case and that there are deeper and stronger reasons for the idealist view we shall presently see. Here we want to point out that the existence of an object apart from knowledge cannot be proved. Whether there are any things or objects in the unexplored regions of the universe can be neither proved nor disproved by us apart from some experience or knowledge of those regions. At least, we can never prove that apart from some thought or experience like ours, there would be what we call objects or things in those regions. Even with regard to an ordinary object like a table, we cannot be sure that it exists as a table when no one perceives it. The secondary qualities of things like their colour, smell, touch, etc. are, on the scientific view, dependent on their relation to our sense organs. If that be so, then apart from relation to our senses, the table will not have any secondary quality and, as such, cease to be a table for us.

What are called the primary qualities of things may also be shown to be dependent on relation to our senses and the synthetic activity of the mind. Hence apart from relation to our experience, the existence of the objects of knowledge cannot be proved, rather their non-existence as things with certain primary and secondary qualities follows logically from the admitted fact of the dependence of those qualities on our experience.

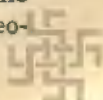
What the real status of the objects of knowledge is and why they cannot exist apart from some experience or mind will become clear when we critically consider the nature and constitution of the objects themselves from the most complex to the simplest. By an object we mean any entity which is presented or presentable to our consciousness in any way,—such as sensation, perception, imagination, thought, etc.,—as something other than but referred to consciousness. In this sense objects may be mental or physical, real or unreal and imaginary, sensible or supersensible, and so on. Among such objects the most complex is the world or the universe as a system of innumerable things and beings—inorganic, organic and conscious—which are closely inter-related as parts of one whole. There is no logical absurdity in supposing that the world is only a series of ideas in the mind of the person who thinks about it, like the one he perceives in a dream. But such a supposition obviously goes against our practical activities and social experiences of the normal waking life. These seem to require an independent external world for their explanation. Hence both common sense and science as well as some systems of philosophy believe that the world has an independent existence of its own apart from all thought and consciousness. This view, however, does not stand to reason. The world as a whole contains selves, minds, consciousness and thought as parts of itself. Therefore, it necessarily depends on them and would not be what it is apart from them. Further, the conception of the universe as a system in which the sun is in the centre and the planets revolve round the sun along their axes with almost mathematical precision, and nature behaves uniformly in all regions, and all things and events are governed by the law of universal causation,—this conception has been reached after centuries of scientific investigation and rational study by human beings in different countries. The world, therefore, exists as a system for educated and cultured people. There is no world-system for undeveloped and uneducated minds like those of babies and of primitive people, far less for the lower animals. The character of the world-system also changed with the advancement of human knowledge, as when the Ptolemaic system was replaced



by the Copernican. All this goes to show that apart from the thoughts of men there would be no world as a system, although it is not to be reduced to mere thoughts or ideas in the minds of men. Some realistic thinkers urge that we have an instinctive belief in the independent existence of an external world, although we cannot prove it. But it is to be noted here that even then the existence of the world is relative to our mental structure as determined by certain inherited and inborn tendencies of thought, emotion and action. Apart from man's experience and thought, scientific or instinctive, there would be no world-system, but one formless, universal existence without parts and their inter-relations. The world as a system has its basis in universal existence and is one of the possible interpretations of man's experiences of it, which required many centuries of scientific and philosophical study and investigation.

Less complex than the world, but more complex than particular, individual objects, are such higher complexes as history, society, State, personality, organism, etc. These cannot be said to exist apart from consciousness, for they either contain or imply or both contain and imply consciousness. Thus history is a chronological record of the events and changes brought about by the actions of human beings and natural forces. As such, it contains mind and consciousness, and also implies them to make a record of its events. So also society and the State contain minds as their constituent parts and imply mind or consciousness to comprehend and understand them as such. Personality as a complex of certain bodily and mental factors is centred in one's self-conscious life and has no meaning and existence apart from it. An organism is a compact whole of many minute cells which combine to form its different parts or organs; and it assimilates food from the surrounding world in order to preserve and develop itself, and performs other organic functions. Although the presence of consciousness in an organism below the animal level may be doubted by many, yet it cannot be doubted that apart from some mind or consciousness to synthesise and inter-relate its different parts and their functions, there would not exist what we describe as an organism. An organism like other higher complexes, therefore, implies consciousness and cannot exist apart from it. Apart from the integrating activity of mind or consciousness, there would be no such complexes, but certain simple existences or one undifferentiated existence as their underlying ground and cause.

Let us next consider the case of relatively simple objects like a table, a chair, a book, etc. Common-sense realism as also neo-



realism hold that these objects exist independently of our experience and are directly perceived by us with all their qualities and relations. But a closer and critical study of the facts would show that what are directly given to us in the perception of these objects are certain sense-data such as colour, taste, smell, touch, etc. These sense-data depend upon the relations between our senses and certain external realities or existences. We say 'existences', and not 'objects', because here we cannot speak of an object unless and until sense-data are presented to us by some existent and taken by us as qualities of that existent. So objects like tables, chairs and books come to exist for us when certain given sense-data are interpreted by us as the qualities of some substances existing in space and time, and having certain relations with other things or substances. Such interpretation of sense-data seems to be necessitated by the constitution of the human mind and the exigencies of human language. We can neither think nor speak of sense-data *as qualities* without relating them to certain substantives called substances which must exist for us in time and space. Hence the ordinary objects of experience have existence only in relation to our mind or consciousness. It may be urged here that *something* must first be given to the mind to work on and interpret as a substance with qualities and relations and that this something exists independently of the mind. To this we are to say that apart from the synthetic activity of the mind to interpret sense-data, there would be no things, not even *something* for us. Hence what is first presented to us in immediate apprehension, without any thought or interpretation, is pure existence without any name, form or quality. We may call it something if we like, but it would be very different from any thing or object of our sense-experience. Further, every object of the world has innumerable qualities and relations; and its existence is inextricably bound up and perfectly continuous with that of other objects, or the whole of existence, just as the waves in a sea are inseparably connected and continuous with one another and the sea as a whole. If, therefore, we perceive or know an object as having a limited number of qualities and relations, and as delimited in space and time, that must be due to the selective and purposive activity of the mind. Of the innumerable qualities and relations of an object we select only those that are relevant for our present interest and purpose, and cognise it as having only the selected characters. Similarly, although the object is embedded in and continuous with the whole of existence, yet we take it as a separate entity, cut off from the rest of existence, because that serves some of our theoretical or practical purposes.



Hence we are to say that the existence of an object as a separate and limited thing is relative to our mind or experience.

Lastly, we have to consider the case of what are generally regarded as the simplest objects of knowledge. Among these may be included sensations and sense-data of which we are immediately aware in sensation, like a patch of green, a sound just heard, or the bare taste or smell of a thing. A sensation is the experience of being immediately aware of a sense-datum. As such, it can have no existence apart from mind. The origin of sense-data depends on the relation of our sense organs with certain external existences, and so they cannot be said to exist independently of our experience. Further, to apprehend a patch of green *as green*, or even *as colour* requires the activity of mind to discriminate it from other colours or from other kinds of sense-data, and name it as 'green' or 'colour'. Apart from such discriminative and verbalising activity of the mind, there would be no experience of a patch of green *as green* or *as colour* even. Similar is the case with regard to other sense-data. Hence the existence of sense-data is relative to our mind and its sensibility. Apart from these, there would be no sense-data like colour etc., but certain existences which in themselves may have no colour, taste or smell.

Other simplest entities, according to some realistic thinkers, are the ultimates in which logical analysis terminates, e.g. atoms, electrons, neutral particulars, etc., and logical constants like implication, disjunction, etc. These are regarded by them as independent of all thought and consciousness. But we are to observe that atoms, electrons or neutral particulars are not sensible facts; they are certain supersensible entities conceived by the human mind to explain the sensible facts of experience. Whether these entities really exist or not we cannot directly know for certain. But that there is an ultimate reality or existence which underlies and causes the sensible world of phenomena, we cannot deny. And it may well be that for purposes of scientific or philosophical explanation the human mind conceives it differently at different times as atoms, electrons, neutral particulars. etc. If it be so, we are to say that such simplest entities as atoms, electrons, etc. are conceptual constructions of ultimate reality or existence and exist only in relation to the mind which conceives and constructs them. As for logical constants like implication, disjunction, etc., they are undoubtedly objects of thought and have meaning and significance only for the mind that conceives and understands them. Some realistic philosophers think that they *subsist* in their own right in the world of being independently of all thought, although they do



not *exist* like ordinary facts. But we are to observe that apart from the mental act of conceiving or meaning, they cannot have even a shadowy being called subsistence. What subsistence, as distinguished from existence, is can hardly be understood by any but our conceptual thought. Hence logical constants have a conceptual existence only in relation to some thinking minds. We may go further and say that in a sense they represent reality or existence conceptualised in the form of certain logical relations. Logical relations are true in so far they have their basis in reality or existence, as that is known and thought about by us.

In the light of the foregoing discussion we may conclude that the objects of knowledge are not subjective ideas in our mind, except when we make ideas of the mind themselves objects of our thought or knowledge. All objects of the world, from the simplest to the most complex, have in them pure being or existence as their ultimate basis and essential stuff. It is out of this ultimate stuff that the different objects of the world and the world as a whole are formed or constructed by the human mind through the interpretation of certain data and the application of certain universal forms and categories. Although the appearance of the data and the application of the forms and categories of knowledge depend partly on our mind, yet the ultimate stuff of existence in the objects is independent of our mind and consciousness. It follows that the objects of knowledge, although necessarily related to mind or experience, cannot yet be reduced to mere ideas or contents of our mind. The notion of objectivity is thus found to be trans-subjective despite its subjective implication.





## A Positivist Characterisation of Values

by

G. N. MATHRANI, *Bombay.*

Analysis of value-propositions will enable us to determine the character of values. Generally, in the value-propositions occurring in the common speech, value-terms are placed as predicates. For example 'X is good' (where X stands for an action of a certain person or a group of persons, or for a motive of an action). 'X is beautiful' (where X may stand for a painting, a poem or anything else which can be characterised as beautiful). Value terms can also be used as adjectival prefixes of nouns.

Grammatically value terms are sometimes shown as adjectives and sometimes as nouns. According to Logical Positivism value terms as nouns are to be treated as adjectives; as nouns, they are misleading. As nouns, they are merely deification of adjectives. Adjectives are usually considered to be names of qualities characterising things denoted by noun words. Value terms as adjectives are to be distinguished from sensory adjectives (adjectives referring to sensory qualities) such as blue and red, big and small, rough and smooth. In the sense in which red and blue, rough and smooth enter our sense experience, good and beautiful do not enter our sense experience. In short value adjectives like 'good' and 'beautiful' are not names of sensory properties of objects.

The above analysis would suggest that value-propositions are inferences and not perceptions. According to Wittgensteinian school, the questions 'What is goodness?', and 'What is beauty?' are not questions demanding the analysis of the essence of Good and Beauty. They are questions demanding the criteria of the use of the adjectives 'good' and 'beautiful'. Criterion of a value is nothing more than a rule of grammar, a rule about the usage of the value-term, and value-propositions are only instances of the application of the presupposed criterion. For example, the hedonistic theory may be taken as a criterion or a rule of grammar for the usage of the adjective 'good' and not as an analysis of the essence of Good. 'Charity is good' may be shown to be an instance of the application of the hedonistic criterion. The Syntax of the

questions,—‘What is value?’ ‘What is Good?’, ‘What is Beauty?’—misleads the unwary to search for the essence of value.

Controversies about values are either about the validity of a criterion or about the application of a criterion, though apparently sometimes the controversy may seem to be about the nature and essence of a value. The question regarding the implied or presupposed relation between the conditions embodied in a given criterion and the value of which it is the criterion is invalid and cannot be raised.

Wittgensteinian views about values should be distinguished from A. J. Ayer's views. According to Ayer, value-terms are pseudo-concepts and value-propositions are not assertions, but merely emotive expressions and social commands. According to Wittgenstein, rules of grammar (rules governing the usage) and not the methods of verification determine the meaning and significance of verbal symbols. Wittgenstein compares language to chess-game. Chess has to be played by observing certain rules that govern the movement of chess-men on the chess-board. Any movement which is according to a rule is permitted and therefore is valid. Similarly any symbol or a combination of symbols (a word or a proposition) that has a rule or a set of rules governing its usage has a meaning, whereas Ayer postulates verifiability as the criterion of meaning. ‘Verifiability’ roughly may be defined as ‘possibility of confirmation by sense experience.’ Since value terms do not denote anything in our sense experience, they must be rejected as pseudo-concepts. We have shown earlier that for Wittgenstein, if there is an operative rule of grammar determining the usage of a value-term, that value-term is a significant adjective and not a pseudo-concept.

Any one might doubt the positivist character of this theory of meaning. But Wittgenstein's theory is definitely positivist, as the rules of grammar, in their origin and operation, are positivistic. The rules of grammar are derived from an empirical study of language. The rules of grammar are fact-born and not mind-born. They also operate in the empirical realm.

Now we shall show that from Wittgensteinian point of view value-propositions are not emotive expressions or social commands. According to A. J. Ayer, the function of language is to describe facts and express emotions and attitudes. Accordingly he postulates two classes of forms of expression,—(i) representative or



descriptive and (ii) emotive or expressive. Through representative forms of expression we refer to or describe facts, reality or experience (objectively observable and introspectively observable) directly or indirectly. Through emotive forms of expression we express our feelings and attitudes and thereby try to induce similar feelings and attitudes or some other desired feelings and attitudes in the minds of others. Describing emotions is different from expressing emotions. 'X is anxious about Y' 'A is afraid of B' are descriptive propositions about emotions. In expressive propositions the primary purpose is to release or give vent to one's felt emotions and not describe them. Emotions can be expressed through action and movement, through observable changes in the eyes and facial expressions and also through words and sounds. Expressive propositions are a vocal expression of emotions. They may be named or characterised as articulate exclamations.

According to Ayer, language consists of these two classes of verbal forms, and since value propositions are not descriptive of facts they must be expressive of emotions. To quote Mr. Ayer, "In saying that a certain type of action is right or wrong, I am not making any factual statement, not even a statement about my own state of mind. I am merely expressing certain moral sentiments." "In every ethical judgement the function of the relevant ethical word is purely emotive. It is used to express feeling about certain objects, but not to make any assertion about them."

That all ethical propositions are non-factual in their contents is a correct analysis, but that all ethical propositions are essentially expressive in character may be questioned. What is the character of the contention that all ethical propositions are essentially and merely expressive of emotions? Is it an empirically verifiable proposition? What is the empirical method for ascertaining whether or not a given ethical proposition is communicative of a thought or only expressive of a feeling? That all ethical propositions are essentially expressive cannot be accepted as an empirically verified proposition, as there is no known method to verify such a proposition. This proposition is more a formal conclusion (a logical implication) from certain presuppositions than an empirically verified truth. The formal argument is 'There are only two classes of propositions, factual and expressive. Value propositions are not factual. Therefore they must be expressive.'

Ayer's view has to be distinguished from Westermarck's from whom he (Ayer) seems to have derived his view. According to

Westermarck, moral concepts are ultimately based on emotions either of indignation or of approval. This statement may be subjected to two interpretations,—(i) that genetically moral judgments are preceded and determined by moral emotions (of approval and indignation), (ii) that moral judgments are descriptive, referring to moral emotions. E.g. 'X is good' means 'X is an object of the emotion of approval' or 'X evokes emotion of approval'. The emotion may be original (felt by the person who makes the judgment) or derived (felt by a social authority recognised by the person who makes the judgment). The second interpretation is the commonly accepted interpretation of Westermarck's theory. In either case Westermarck's view does not imply that moral judgments are simply articulate exclamations, which is the expressed view of Mr. Ayer.

Wittgensteinian view is different from both, Ayer's and Westermarck's. From Wittgensteinian stand-point division of propositions into factual or descriptive and emotive or expressive is not sufficiently exhaustive. There are many propositions which apparently are neither factual nor emotive. For example, propositions in Mathematics and formal logic. In formal logic, laws of thought such as the laws of identity and of non-contradiction are neither descriptive of facts nor expressive of emotions, and yet they cannot be rejected as nonsensical and meaningless propositions. According to us, besides the two classes of propositions (descriptive and expressive), there is a third class that of symbolic propositions. The meaning and significance of a symbolic proposition consists in its being an implication of one or more other propositions, or in its implying an implication or a set of implications. In fact, if A. J. Ayer's own language were to be analysed, many of his propositions would be found to be symbolic in character; and if their symbolic character is not acknowledged they will have to be rejected as meaningless and communicative of no sense. Propositions in History and Sciences are mainly descriptive of facts. Propositions in Poetry are chiefly expressive, and propositions in Mathematics and Formal Logic are symbolic. Propositions in Metaphysics are both symbolic and expressive.

*Value propositions are more symbolic than expressive in character, and they resemble mathematical propositions more than propositions in poetry.* The effort to define, to analyse and to draw out implications distinguishes Mathematics from Poetry, whose soul (essential function) is beauty of expression and not analysis of



thought. Pure poetry is essentially a vehicle for expressing emotions and attitudes; communication of thought and information is a secondary function of poetry. The intellectual content (if there be any) is a part of the poet's felt mental content and a device to transfer his emotions, embodied in his work, to others (who would read his work). It is for that reason that he does not analyse his intellectual content.

In formal Logic, Ethics and other normative sciences there is a persistent effort to define and analyse, which brings out the symbolic character of their contents. As in Mathematics, in Ethics too every value-proposition is a formal implication of some more primary value-proposition. Ayer's stand-point that all value propositions are merely emotive expressions should mean that utterance of every value proposition is accompanied by a suitable feeling state (moral emotion). It is possible to conceive the possibility of a person uttering a value proposition without at the same time experiencing any moral emotion. *Moral evaluation can be as cool and unemotional as mathematical calculation.* Just as in mathematical calculation the result is arrived at by applying certain rules of calculation, similarly our ethical judgments are formed by applying certain moral criteria. It is possible that in the process of applying the criteria of moral values no emotions are felt. This stand-point denies that moral emotions are a necessary accompaniment of moral judgments. But as a matter of fact sometimes moral judgments are accompanied by emotional experiences. In such cases moral judgments tend to become dynamic and may lead to action. But such felt emotions cannot be characterised as the logical content of the moral judgments.

Now we shall discuss the question whether value propositions are verbal or conceptual in their contents and whether they are empirical or apriori in origin.

From the stand-point of Wittgensteinians at Cambridge value propositions are symbolic in character, verbal in contents and empirical in origin. The contention that value propositions are verbal in their contents is derived from the empiricist denial of abstract ideas. According to the empiricist stand-point of Cambridge Positivists, there are no abstract ideas corresponding to abstract words, but the abstract words have a functional significance in the sense that they can be referentially used in various experiential contexts for pointing out common features of experience. Since value



terms are abstract words, and since there are no abstract ideas corresponding to abstract words, value propositions must be verbal in their contents. The use of abstract words is learnt as a result of the study of language. According to them, the rules of grammar of value terms (like all other rules of grammar) are embedded in the language. Therefore value propositions may be said to be empirical in origin.

Personally I do not subscribe to this view. Nor can Wittgenstein's philosophy be identified with any set of positivist opinions. Wittgenstein used to say, "Wittgenstein has no opinions, Wittgenstein has a method and not a dogma." His method is a method of analysis of language and experience. By applying this method of analysis it is possible to arrive at different opinions. Even at Cambridge, opinions based on the method of analysis have been changing. At the earlier stage it was believed that "philosophical propositions are nonsense"; later on, John Wisdom, the foremost of Cambridge Wittgensteinians, developed a view "that philosophical propositions are often times verbal recommendations and that philosophers are not only dupes of language they are also reformers of language."

An effort will be made to show that value propositions are conceptual in their contents and that in one important sense they may even be said to be apriori in origin. According to Dr. C. D. Broad,<sup>1</sup> if abstract words have functional significance, then in a sense there are abstract ideas. According to him, functional use of abstract words is not a verbal game, playing with abstract words according to certain rules of grammar. For Broad functional use of abstract words implies abstract thinking, and he considers abstract thinking to be a mental activity and not merely a verbal activity. It may be pointed out that *denying abstract thinking as a mental activity is a result of wrong analysis of concrete thinking* (thinking of particular objects). That wrong analysis was made by Berkeley, a British empiricist. The conclusions of Berkeley are the presupposed argument in the positivist attempt to reduce abstract thinking to a verbal activity. Berkeley identified particular and concrete ideas with mental images. This is wrong. But Berkeley's famous refutation of Abstract ideas can be shown to be an implication of his wrong presupposition about concrete and par-

1. This refers to Professor Broad's class lectures at Cambridge, during 1936-38.



ticular ideas. His cry in despair about his inability to form an idea of a man in general who is neither tall nor short nor medium in stature, who is neither black nor white, nor yellow nor brown etc. etc., was claimed to be his empirical evidence for denying abstract and general ideas. Analysis of such arguments would make it obvious that Berkeley identified ideas with mental images, and that he denied abstract and general ideas because he could not find in his mind mental pictures corresponding to general and abstract words.

My idea of any object is never exhausted by any one or a number of mental pictures I may form in my mind. For example, my idea of Jawaharlal Nehru cannot be exhausted by any number of mental pictures of him in my mind. Image is a device for directing the mind's attention to the idea of the object. Similarly the use of abstract words is a device for directing the mind's attention to the abstract ideas. It is the noun word 'idea' that misleads the philosopher. It is better to drop the word 'idea' and use the functional word 'thinking'. 'Thinking of concrete objects' and 'thinking of abstract ideas' must be understood properly. 'Thinking of abstract ideas' only means directing the mind's attention to certain common characteristics of a number of objects severally experienced. *In the light of the above analysis, we can now say that thinking of values is more than a verbal use of value-terms. In other words value propositions are conceptual in their contents. To think of a value is to direct the mind's attention to a number of experiences which embody the given value in varying degrees. Thinking of a value is analysable into, but is not reducible to, thinking of particular experiences.*<sup>2</sup>

Is the knowledge of values acquired from experience or it develops from within? We should, first of all, distinguish between pseudo ethical propositions and proper ethical propositions. All ethical propositions which can be shown to be mandatory in character (authoritative commands derived from the will of God or any powerful human agency) are pseudo ethical propositions. Ethical propositions which are rational recommendations derived from the sense of rational obligatoriness can be characterised as truly ethical propositions. Even the example taken by A. J. Ayer (stealing is wrong) can be shown to be an implication of a social mandate and

2. Refer to the author's paper on 'Positivism and Metaphysics' in the proceedings volume of the Indian Philosophical Congress, 1952.



not of any fundamental ethical criterion. Stealing is wrong because it is against the law of personal property.

Again the derived ethical propositions are to be distinguished from the fundamental ethical propositions. For example 'charity is good' can be shown to be a derived moral law from the hedonistic criterion of Good or from any other criterion. The question whether value propositions are empirical or apriori in origin should be confined to the fundamental ethical propositions. *In this connection I draw a distinction between the idea of criterion of value and the idea of distinction between fact and value (desire and desirable).* The idea of the criterion or criteria is first acquired from social environment and afterwards subjected to rational criticism. The idea of distinction between fact and value is derived from the response of rational nature of the human mind to the experience of facts. The idea of 'ought' or 'desirable' is a felt constituent of the rational consciousness of the human self, and as such it is, in a sense, innate. *From language and other social environments we derive value criteria, but value consciousness is derived from our inherited rational nature.* Value consciousness is silenced when we are overpowered by passions and desires, but on the level of Self awareness (awareness of our rational nature) the idea of 'ought' is inseparable from us. To be aware of our rational nature implies the awareness of the idea of 'ought'.

In conclusion, I have to say that according to me value propositions are symbolic in character, intellectual or conceptual in content, and the most fundamental concept in Ethics (the idea of 'ought') is an integral element in our rational Self-Consciousness.





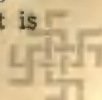
# The Meaning and Verification of Truth

by

PRAVAS JIVAN CHAUDHURY

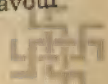
It appears that the meaning of truth differs with a certain difference in the context in which the term is used. The modes of determination of truth also differ with these latter, and the meanings are known from an enquiry into the modes. In other words, the meaning of truth is derived from the method of verification of a statement; and since these methods change with a certain kind of change in the context in which the statement is made, the concrete denotation of the term also changes. The controversy that goes on over the question of the meaning of truth amongst so many philosophers has its basis in the wrong assumption that the term is, or at least should be, univocal, and as such must be used in a certain kind of context only. This is, however, a vain and gratuitous proposal arising out of the philosopher's love of simplicity and clarity. The term is actually used in various senses in various contexts, and our business is to find out and distinguish these various meanings. We cannot and need not persuade people to change their usage of words. A particular theory of truth brings out a particular use of the term, and so far it serves true philosophy well. But in so far as it seeks to offer it as the only meaning at the cost of others, it is confusing, and does not know its proper function.

Let us examine the various meanings of truth in various situations. There are certain statements which are said to be self-evidently true. My statement regarding my present headache is of this type; for by my having headache I mean my feeling of headache, which is admittedly an appearance, and I cannot logically say that what appears to me may not be really appearing. Leaving aside the chance of verbal error, I cannot think that my statement can be false. The same is the case with analytical statements such as, for instance, "all brothers are males". Thus the circumstance of some statements being known as logically or necessarily true gives rise to a particular notion of truth. Nothing is true in this sense which can be thought to be false. To this it may be objected that what cannot be falsified cannot be significantly called true either. For if one does not know what it is



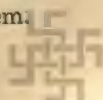
for a statement to be false, what can one really mean by its truth? It is pointed out that the expressions which are self-evidently true are not assertions of objective or public existence, but are mere statements either of private appearances or of logical or verbal implications and, so, are not judgments proper or material propositions which alone are to be characterised by truth and falsity. If a statement asserts nothing capable of being denied or verified on the basis of experience, it cannot be said to be either true or false. However, this criticism of the use of the term "truth" to describe some character of statements of this type assumes another meaning of truth and falsity and also of judgments as fit objects for qualifying with the adjectives "true" and "false". The self-evident truth of a statement means *a priori* certainty with regard to its content, this certainty following from the very meanings of the words used in the statement. In another sense a true statement means one whose certainty is dependent on extra-linguistic or factual matters beyond its content. Therefore, in the first case, a statement may be said to be true significantly in the sense that though this particular statement cannot be thought to be false, one knows what it is for a statement to be so. The deliberate mis-statements are false.

The notion of self-evident truth cannot be applied to statements asserting facts, where by fact one means what can be agreed upon to be there by all observers looking for it, and what is related to other facts through natural laws of co-existence and succession in a common space and time. So for such a statement to be true, the fact alleged therein must be actually there. In other words, what the statement states in the predicate must correspond to a fact, and therefore, must be confirmed by all observers, and must fit in with all the rest of the factual world. Thus we have to adopt a correspondence theory of the meaning and test of truth which, on further analysis, is reduced to a coherence theory. Truth, in this sense, cannot be self-evident; for the statement claiming to be true must be tested against facts which are beyond it and which, again, not being immediately given, have to be determined through a process of comparison and concatenation of judgments whose number is, theoretically speaking, infinite. Thus an operational definition of truth as applying to factual judgments is different from the one applying to non-factual ones examined before; while the latter sort of truth is determinable with finality, the former is, theoretically at least, ever tentative. Thus these two different kinds of truth have to be recognised, and the attempt either to reduce the one to the other or to ignore the one in favour of the other must be abandoned.





The tentative character of truth in the coherence sense follows from the endless number of other statements to be consulted in the verification of a statement for truth in this sense. However, and fortunately enough, experience itself shows that in most cases what is confirmed by a few other statements of other persons on the same matter and/or of the same or other persons on facts causally related to that asserted in the original statement, is seldom reversed by others. They too confirm it, and those very few of them that do not are themselves found to be false when tested in like manner. So that generally one does not require a number of confirmations beyond a certain small limit in order to pass a verdict of truth or falsity. The truth defined by such a practical procedure of its determination may be said to be practically final, though theoretically provisional, and to be an approximation to the absolute truth which is an ideal limit of the series of truths corresponding to the successively greater number of statements confirming it. The ideal limit is approached with the number of conforming statements approaching infinity, and all disconfirming statements themselves being disconfirmed by the former and, so, rendered ineffective. Thus this meaning of truth assumes that an infinity of statements, constituted of those made on a particular fact by different persons and of those made on an infinity of other facts, can be found to form a system. This assumption is partly based on our actual experience within a limited sphere of statements tending towards a system and, so, of truths forming a converging series pointing on an ideal limit. If this assumption is given up as too speculative, that is, as a seductive fallacy, then our coherence-meaning of truth, giving us the theoretically tentative and the practically final truth, will have to be regarded as arbitrary, without any application in our knowledge about nature. This concept of truth will be then like any object of pure mathematics. A point or a line in Euclidean geometry is defined as an ideal object, yet it is an ideal limit of actual objects approaching this state with certain conditions approaching a limiting value. Thus a point may be regarded as an ideal limit of concentric circles with radii approaching zero in length. Because there is convergence to be found in the series of circles, which can be actually drawn on a plane, the concept of a point is not an abstract or unreal one, though one cannot draw it or ostensibly define it. More or less similar is the case of our faith in the systematic unity of the possible perceptual judgments of this world, a faith built on our limited experience of the world so far given to us, where we find our judgments cohering to such an extent as to give us an idea of objects judged to be independent of them.



We would not have thought of an external common world had our judgments conflicted amongst themselves and, so, proved themselves subjective like the illusory ones. If we had more conflicts than agreements and could not organise our experience, there would be no talk of reality and appearance, truth and falsity. The occasional agreements and hints of a system would be treated as accidents in the same manner as we treat similar things happening to our dream-experience. And perhaps we would not notice these phenomena, as we could not compare our experience with that of others, because we would have no language, no social life, no looking before and after.

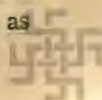
The pragmatic meaning of truth is to be known from the process of verification of truth recommended by the pragmatist. Success in practice is said to be the test of truth of a statement which is to be judged by what it leads to when acted upon. Now if we mean by success ultimate or true success, as does the realist pragmatist, we know this can be the consequence of our statements being true in the traditional (i.e. correspondence-coherence) sense. The knowledge of what is a fact, or what is really there, produces genuine success if made the basis of action. So this pragmatic meaning of truth practically coincides with the traditional one in-so-far as what would be declared true in one sense would be so declared in the other sense also. In other words, both the traditionalist applying his coherence test and the pragmatist his own test of success will come to pass the same verdict of truth or falsity on a particular statement. However, the difference between the two meanings of truth is also obvious. For though both may mean by truth what is really there, yet by reality or factuality they mean different things in-so-far as they have different criteria for determining it. A criterion for the recognition of a concept is an essential character of it and, so, a part of its meaning. There is also another difference between the two meanings of truth. The coherence meaning of truth does not apply to certain statements, such as those of religion, morals and politics, which are mostly expressions of one's feelings, preferences and commands, though generally they are in the indicative mood and seem to describe some natural matters of fact. The metaphysical statements referring to super-sensuous objects, like God, soul and substance, are unverifiable by the coherence test, and can be neither true nor false in the coherence sense. But truth in the pragmatic sense applies to all such normative and metaphysical statements, for the former sort have their appeal to will and conduct and the latter to our emotions, and both have consequences, either good or bad.





on human affairs. This is a significant difference between the two meanings of truth; for while the statement, "Do not kill" or "You have a permanent soul" is neither true nor false in one sense, it is either true or false in the other sense. We have a meaning of the word "red" other than the ordinary, if we find that while in the ordinary sense it is meaningless to call a political party 'red', in another it is meaningful.

Now passing over to another sort of pragmatism we see that the pragmatic criterion of truth, success in practice, may mean immediate success judged by a feeling of satisfaction. In this sense, adopted by the idealistic pragmatist, we readily see that what is true may be false after a while and, so, truth and falsity are not permanent characters of a statement. They are but what happen to a statement as it functions as a plan of action. Thus the statement, "There is God", when acted upon, may prove true in one context and false in another, depending, as we know, on many other circumstances than the intrinsic truth, if any, in the traditional sense, of the sentence. The statement itself cannot be said to be both true and false at once, if by truth and falsity we mean essential characters of statements; so the pragmatist has to use these terms as descriptive of temporary titles a statement acquires in the course of its active service in human affairs as a tool. It is like a pen of an author, being a success at one time and a failure at another. Thus the idealistic pragmatist does not mean by truth any character belonging essentially and permanently to, and, so, defining, a statement; he means by it a contingent consequence of a statement when it is acted upon. In this he is different from his brothers in the field. The upholder of the self-evidential theory of truth knows a statement to be true from the linguistic (semantical and syntactical) rules themselves without any reference to experience, so he both means and verifies truth to be a permanent character of a statement. The philosopher who takes truth in the coherence-sense means by truth a permanent character of certain statements even though he cannot prove any statement to be true for good, as he cannot exhaust all the possible confirming statements. Yet, as we have seen, he believes in truth being a permanent character of certain statements, because he has found from experience that what is confirmed by a number of statements is also confirmed by others, that indecision regarding the truth and falsity of a statement is speedily eliminated in actual practice where, generally speaking, all evidences agree and point to a verdict of truth or falsity. And because he sees that if truth is not taken as a permanent character of certain statements but as



what accidentally happens to them, there would be no objective knowledge but mere opinions, no science but mere haphazard dreaming; and, so, it is better to start with the postulate that truth is a permanent character of certain statements than with its opposite. The realistic pragmatist also means by truth a permanent character for similar reasons. What he contends against his idealist brother is that if one accepts no hard data or an independent world to start with, if, that is to say, we have a perfectly fluid and flexible environment, then in what sense can we be said to be working, succeeding or failing? There will, then, be no human practice worth the name to test truth and falsity of statements. So, as a methodological policy at least, one has to mean by truth some defining character of statements which are true, even if we may not know them to be so with finality. The realistic pragmatist has some empirical justification too for this meaning. We actually find in our limited experience that in certain cases what succeeds in practice for quite a good while seldom fails later. Thus the statement, "Honesty is good" or "Over-eating is bad," is pretty sure to be absolutely true as it is increasingly supported by practice. The pragmatic test, success in practice, gives consistent results with certain types of statements, just as the coherence test does, and, so, we can speak of an ideal limit of the partially verified truths in both cases. We have to note, however, that all this applies to certain types of statements only and not to all, and this points to the limitation of the pragmatic sense of truth. For though the realistic pragmatist actually means by truth an objective permanent character when he speaks of such a statement as "Fate rules our lives" as true, yet his process of determination of truth does not warrant him to mean anything like that. The belief in fate has so far produced both success and failure in human life, and no indication is found from our experience of these diverse consequences that the belief will succeed in the long run (or, for that matter, that it will fail in the long run). There is no overwhelming or converging evidence for concluding anything like that. So that the realistic pragmatist is here practically on the same footing as his idealist brother; he cannot justly mean by truth in contexts like this anything more than a temporary happening to a statement. He will, therefore, do well if he excludes statements of this kind from his judgment of truth and falsity.

The moral to be drawn from this discussion is two-fold. *First*. There are different meanings of truth, and these do not conflict, as long as their use in different situations to express different characters is kept clear in the mind and not mixed up, out of a zeal



for reducing all variety into a dead uniformity. The philosophical controversies raised over the various "theories of truth", as they are called, are verbal, because they arise out of the ambiguity of the term "truth", which really means many things. *Secondly*, such controversies being essentially about the meaning of truth can be resolved by a procedure such as we have adopted here, *viz.*, enquiring into the sources of different meanings of truth and isolating the different characters denoted by them. The sources are the actual methods the different truth-theorists adopt to test and decide what they severally call "truth". The word "truth" is to be followed to its actual use in various contexts by the truth-theorists, in order to bring out the concrete meanings they assign to it.



# The Sense of 'I'

by

K. VENKATARAMANAN,

*Santiniketan*

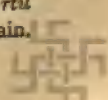
1. The scope of this paper is to give an analysis of the sense of 'I' in the light of what we find on this topic in the most comprehensive work of Nāgārjuna, viz., the Prajñā-pāramitā-Śāstra (hereafter abbreviated as the 'Śāstra'), which is now lost in the original and is found only in its Chinese translation.<sup>2</sup> This paper is an attempt to consider in the light of the Śāstra, such questions as: (i) the meaning of the sense of 'I', (ii) the rise of the sense of 'I', and (iii) the different uses of the sense of 'I'. The whole treatment is limited to a consideration of things in their mundane truth (vyavahārasatya).

An important point that emerges from this analysis is that, according to the Śāstra, the sense of 'I' is not only an indisputable but also an indispensable mundane truth. The sense of 'I' which has its significance in the relative distinction that it makes within experience not only holds good in the world but is essential there. It is in fact the root of all distinctions that constitute the mundane truth. But the sense of 'I' would become the false sense of self (satkāyadr̥ṣṭi) when what is only a relative distinction is turned into an absolute division, the relative being mistaken for the absolute, and the distinct for the divided.

Another point, not less important than the one noted above, is that the sense of 'I', according to the Śāstra, is the reflection

1. The sense of 'I', the sense of self, self-consciousness, or simply self meaning individual empirical subject, are used here as synonyms. In Skt. citta or Vijñāna is the term used in this connection. See below n. 11.

2. Taisho edn. of the Tripitaka, Vol. XXV, (T. 1509); tr. by Kumara-jiva in the yr. 405 A.D., see Dr. P. C. Bagchi, *Le Canon Bouddhique En Chine*, Tome Ier, p. 197. This is a very big text consisting of one hundred chapters in its Chinese translation. Prof. Etienne Lamotte has published his French translations of the first eighteen chapters along with his scholarly introduction and copious literary and historical notes: *Le Traite De La Grande Vertu De Sagesse*, vols. I and II, publ. 1944 and 1949, Bureaux Du Museon, Louvain.





of the Unconditioned Reality in the conditioned self-conscious intellect. The sense of 'I', implicating by contrast the sense of not-I, naturally belongs to the world of the determinate. It is a fundamental tenet of the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna that the conditioned changing entity is itself in its ultimate nature the Unconditioned Reality, the Nirvāṇa.<sup>3</sup> The uniqueness of the self-conscious principle is that there is immanent in it the awareness of the Unconditioned Reality as its ultimate nature. But in our ignorance, the unconditionedness which is its ultimate nature is transferred wrongly to itself in its mundane nature. It is thus that the conditioned is mistaken for the Unconditioned, the relative for the absolute.

2. In the Philosophy of Nāgārjuna, Śūnyata in the mundane sphere means, negatively, the denial of unconditionedness and substantiality; and positively, it is the revelation of the conditioned and changing nature of things. The denial here is not of the things themselves, but of the uncritically believed absoluteness and substantiality of things, which are in truth relative and non-substantial. Through ignorance we misconceive, and the misconception consists in the imagination of absoluteness in regard to things that are relative, or the imposition of unconditionedness on things that are conditioned. This is the basic form of error, viz., the error of misplaced absoluteness.

Broadly, avidyā is removed and Śūnyata (the true nature of things) is realized at two levels, the 'mundane' and the 'trans-mundane'. The error in respect of the mundane truth is the naive imagination that everything is unconditioned and substantial. With the removal of this error, it is realized that everything is relative and non-substantial, conditioned and changing. This is to say that all things are *śūnya*. This is the right comprehension of things in their mundane nature.

"People, while still under the sway of the sleep of (ignorance and) passion ... see the unreal and non-substantial as real and substantial and cling to them. But when they realize the awakening to the Way, then they understand (that the things to which they clung before as real and substantial are indeed unreal and non-substantial) and then they laugh (at their own former foolish imagination)."<sup>4</sup>

3. See below n. 8.

4. T. 1509/103a-b.

"The crooked dog standing by the well barks at its own shadow, ... gives himself up to crooked thoughts, falls into the well (with the intention of killing the dog in the well) and kills itself instead. Just the same is the case with the ignorant. ... (In regard to the body-mind complex) they entertain the thought of real, substantial self, and thus become prone to hatred, etc., in regard to individuals, and fall themselves into evil states of existence."<sup>5</sup>

"The common people, owing to the poison of ignorance and passion, become perverted in regard to everything. In regard to the impermanent they have the thought of permanence, ... in regard to things really devoid of selfhood, they have the thought of self. But when they realise the true Wisdom of the Noble, destroy the poison of ignorance, ... and achieve the comprehension of the truth of impermanence, etc., of things, then they abandon their perversion and do not any more cling to things."<sup>6</sup>

'If people would know through their wisdom the truth of the devoidness of self-hood and of the non-substantiality of things, then their perversion and passion would come to an end.' Now, this comprehension that everything is sunya, i.e., conditioned and changing, which is the right comprehension of the mundane nature of things, might lead one to another kind of error, viz., the error of imagining that the conditioned nature of things is itself their ultimate nature, i.e., that everything is absolutely conditioned. Now, this would mean an absolute division between the conditioned and the Unconditioned, the divided and the Undivided; and in this case, the Undivided would not be the truly undivided, as it would be divided from the divided. The Undivided Being would not be the true nature (Bhūtalakṣaṇa) of things, as It would be absolutely different and completely separate from them. And finally, the Undivided Being would be of no significance to us, the denizens of the world of the divided; for, the divided, particular individual would never be able to realize the Undivided Being.<sup>7</sup>

This, then, is another error, not at the level where the conditioned was mistaken for the Unconditioned, but at a different level. For, here, the conditioned is recognised to be conditioned, but it is mistaken to be absolutely conditioned. This is an error

5. *ibid.*, 691a.

6. *ibid.*, 171c.

7. From the standpoint of the Ultimate Truth there is neither the way nor the fruit; but from the standpoint of the mundane truth 'there is really the way and there is really the fruit' (*ibid.*, 662a).





not in respect of the mundane nature of things, but in respect of their ultimate nature. This is also a case of the error of misplaced absoluteness. For, while the conditionedness of the conditioned and the consequent division between the conditioned and the Unconditioned are alike conditioned,<sup>8</sup> they are here mistaken to be absolute and ultimate. The removal of this error here means the realization that the things that appear in the world to be relative and changing are themselves in their ultimate nature, the Nirvāṇa,—the Eternal, Undivided Being.<sup>9</sup>

The analysis given above has a bearing on the sense of self:

(i) When the sense of self refers to the mundane nature of the individual, it would be false if it should mean that the individual is an eternal substance; the individual is *śūnya*, i.e., not unconditioned and substantial, but conditioned and changing.

(ii) When the sense of self refers to the ultimate nature of the individual, it would be false, if it should mean that the individual is absolutely conditioned, i.e., conditioned even in his ultimate nature; this would then mean that the individual is absolutely different and completely separate from the Unconditioned Reality; the sense of self in reference to the ultimate nature of the individual would be an unerring sense if it is recognized that the individuality of the individual is not unconditioned; this means the recognition that the individual in his ultimate nature is the Undivided Being, the Unconditioned Reality.

3. Error arises, we could say, when what is true of the ultimate nature is imputed to the mundane nature, when unconditionedness is imposed on the conditioned. The basic error is the error of *satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*. The object of this *dr̥ṣṭi* is the individual body-mind complex, the empirical self; it owes its being to the individuating act of the self-conscious intellect (*vijñāna*) which, having differentiated the undifferented, identifies itself with the differentiated, i.e., the specific complex entity, the body-mind. And in this identification, the intellect, owing to the operation of ignorance, wrongly transfers its sense of unconditionedness, which is its ultimate nature, to itself in its mundane nature. The sense of self is due to the self-conscious intellection; but the falsity in the false sense of self is owing to ignorance.

8. This is in other words the *Sunyata* of *Sunyata* which means that the conditionedness of the conditioned is not unconditioned.

9. *Ibid.*, 198a; cf. *Mādhyaṃika Kārikas* (M.K.) XXV: 9, 19 and 20.

It is in this self-conscious intellection<sup>10</sup> that the crux of individuality lies. But the self-conscious intellection (*viññāna*) is not itself to be identified with the wrong notion of individuality (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*). It becomes the wrong notion when it functions under ignorance. *Viññāna* functioning under the light of knowledge would be the unerring sense of self. The sense of 'I' is at cross roads; it has a double reference; it shares at once two orders of being, the conditioned and the unconditioned; it is at once a universalizing as well as a particularizing tendency; it can work as much for liberation as for bondage; it can work non-clingingly as well as by clinging. To bring out this fact of the flexibility of the sense of self, the *Śāstra* mentions that the sense of 'I' is *avyākṛta*—ethically undefined, *mṛdu*—flexible.<sup>11</sup> What makes the difference in the working of the self-conscious intellect either in one way or in the other is the continuation or the extinction of the perverting force of ignorance. *Satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* is perversion at its root. This is to be distinguished from the unerring sense of self.

4. The sense of self or the sense of 'I', according to the *Sastra*, is the reflection of the Unconditioned Reality in the conditioned self-conscious intellect; it is the sense of the Real in man.

"The moon is in the sky, but the image appears in the water. The moon of the Universal Reality is in the sky of Tathata, Dharma-dhatu, Bhuta-koti, while its reflection, the sense of 'I' and 'mine', appears in man."<sup>12</sup>

The sense of 'I' in its true form is the sense of the Real immanent in man; the true import, the ultimate original meaning of 'I' is self-being, unconditionedness. But the mind, the self-conscious intellect, under the influence of ignorance, comes to apply wrongly this sense of underivedness to itself in its mundane, i.e., derived, nature, as well as to that with which it identifies itself, and through that to all things that it alights upon.

"The shadow appears only when there is the bright light; when there is no light there is no shadow. Similarly, when

10. Self-conscious intellection, intellect, the principle of self-consciousness—all these are intended to convey the meaning of *viññāna* in this context. *Viññāna* is one of the terms so widely used in the Buddhist texts that it is inaccessible to any one rigid definition.

11. *ibid.*, 730a.

12. *ibid.*, 102b.





the kleśas and the samyojanas (products of ignorance) obstruct the light of Samyagdr̥ṣṭi (or Prajñā), then there arise the shadow of 'I' and the shadows of all other things."<sup>13</sup>

"Moreover, it is in the still sheet of water that the image of the moon becomes visible, which is not visible in the disturbed water. In the heart that is stupefied by ignorance, there become visible the sense of ego, the sense of pride and the consequent factors of bondage. But, when the water of the heart is beaten and disturbed by true wisdom, then the ego image and the pride image do not appear."<sup>14</sup>

As the possibility of the shadow, there is the light behind; as the possibility of the sense of self, there is the awareness of the Universal Reality, the Prajñā, immanent in every being.<sup>15</sup> It is under ignorance that one misses the moon and sees only the image, and mistakes the image itself for the real moon. It is then that the sense of 'I' comes to be applied exclusively to the object with which the self-conscious intellect has identified itself. And with this identification of the intellect with the specific object, the ultimate meaning of self, viz., self-being, underivedness, comes to be applied, only wrongly, to this very object, and thus the derived comes to be mistaken for the underived. And then the misapplication of this sense of unconditionedness comes to be extended to everything that the differentiating intellect alights upon; every particular individual entity comes to be endowed with underivedness and substantiality, of which it is actually devoid. And thus there arises the clinging in regard to everything.

"On account of the false sense of self one has the sense of ego (as a real separate entity). On account of the lack of the true knowledge of things, one sees everything (as a real separate entity)."<sup>16</sup>

This identification of the self-conscious intellect with the specific, conditioned, complex entity as one's own self would lead

13. *ibid.*, 104a.

14. *ibid.*, 102b.

15. Among other passages in the Sastra speaking of the immanence of the Universal Reality in every being, these could be noted here: 'Within the heart of everything there is the Universal Reality, (the ever-present) self-being.' (*ibid.*, 563c-564a.) '(This Tathata, the Universal Reality is in every being.) It is in the Buddha, it is also in the bodhisattva, for it is One, Undivided'. (*ibid.*, 653c.)

16. *ibid.*, 102b.



to dividing all the rest as what is external to oneself, in contrast to this specific entity which by virtue of its having been identified with the self-conscious principle itself comes to be considered as internal. Thus there arise the distinctions of the self and the other, the internal and the external. While these distinctions belong to the very essence of the mundane nature of things, and constitute the very form in which the entire mundane existence appears, they are turned into falsity when they are treated not as relative distinctions but as absolute divisions. On the basis of this notion of the absolute exclusiveness of self, there proceeds the other tendency of the principle of intellection, viz., the tendency to unify, but now in terms of 'I' and that which 'belongs to me', the 'mine', i.e., in terms of possession. Thus there arise greed and anger, and the sinful deeds prompted by them.

"From the sense of 'I' there arises the sense of 'mine'. With the rise of the sense of 'I' and the sense of 'mine', there arises the sense of greed in regard to things that benefit the self, and there arises the sense of anger in regard to the things that thwart the interest of the self. Such bonds of passions as these arise not out of wisdom but out of madness and perversion. Therefore they are called the products of stupidity. These three poisons of greed etc. are the root of all klesas. All these owe their being to the (false) sense of self."<sup>17</sup>

But the sense of 'I' is not itself committed to giving rise to these poisons. For, it can work as much for bondage as for freedom, as much for doing evil deeds as for doing deeds of merit.

"From the 'I' there arise all deeds that bind as well as all the deeds of merit (that set one free from ignorance and pain)."<sup>18</sup>

The false sense of 'I' and the consequent sense of possession arise not only in regard to the entire individual entity, the body-mind complex as a whole, but they arise also in regard to each of the elements within the complex entity, i.e., in regard to each of the five skandhas.

"Owing to the power of the false sense of self, one sees the self in four ways, viz., that 'rupa is I', that 'rupa is mine',

17. *ibid.*, 286c.

18. *ibid.*





that 'in me there is rupa' and that 'in rupa there is myself'. (Similar kinds of views arise even in regard to the other four skandhas). Thus there are altogether twenty kinds of the false sense of self. When one realizes the awakening to the true wisdom, then one understands the falsity of these."<sup>19</sup>

In truth, all the activities that arise in the body-mind complex arise without in the least implicating any eternal I-substance. But the ignorant imagine an eternal, independent ego-substance as the knower, the doer of deeds and the enjoyer of the results.<sup>20</sup>

The denial of such an eternal independent ego-substance that is supposed to inhabit every individual body-mind complex is not the same thing as the denial of agency and moral responsibility of the self-conscious person. Personality which is truly dynamic and organismic itself becomes impossible on the supposition of such an unchanging, ultimate I-substance; the error of misplaced absoluteness cuts at the very root of all dynamic, organismic relatedness which is the essence of mundane life. *Sūnyata* as the mundane truth is a denial not of mundane life but of the absoluteness that is falsely imposed on the mundane things; it is at the same time a revelation of their essential relativity and dynamism. And that is the only way how agency and moral responsibility become meaningful.

"To deny the individual in the mundane truth is an error. The Abhidharma, no doubt, says that there are things that are pure as well as things that are impure, only he that experiences them is not to be found . . . . . (Although the Abhidharma says this) it is not correct. If there is no person, then there is no-one to whom the things pure and impure can belong. In this case there would not be any doer, and in the absence of the doer, there would not be either the deeds or their fruits; and thus there would be no bondage or liberation. For example, when anyone feels the burning of fire and keeps away from it, it is not that the fire itself keeps away from fire. . . . . When people fear pain and keep away from it, it is not that the pain itself gives up pain."

While the sense of self is an indisputable and indispensable mundane truth, the false sense of self is the root of all afflictions

19. *ibid.*, 103c.

20. Among other places in the text, ch. 12 is worth noting for a criticism of the soul-theory of the non-Buddhists.



and wrong notions. *Trṣṇā* is in essence the thirst for fulfilment, the thirst for the Real. We seek to realize the Real because we have the basic feeling that our present being as we live now is not the True Being, the basic feeling that we miss the Unconditioned. This thirst for the Real, this sense of the Unconditioned, is the root of our whole being, of all that we feel and think, and of all that we do. The empirical self is wholly constituted of this basic urge to realize the Real. But under ignorance, with no knowledge of the true meaning of this thirst, we seize the conditioned as itself the unconditioned, only to find that it is subject to birth and death. This is the source of pain. *Trṣṇā* as the origin of *kleśas* stands for this thirst as the root of seizing and clinging. *Kleśa* is the painful state of emotional conflict which results from this failure to fulfil the thirst, from this disparity between the expected and the realized.

Avidyā, functioning again through *trṣṇā*, gives rise to *drṣṭi*, which consists in the seizing of the specific concepts and the conceptual systems that embody them as themselves absolute and limitless. This is dogmatism, claiming absoluteness for the relative, completeness for the fragmentary. This is perversion. Conditioned by thirst, there is in each individual, the interest, the concern, for the things that satisfy his need; everyone has concern for the things of his interest. But in our ignorance we make the claim of universality and absoluteness to the relative, specific concepts or conceptual systems that embody them, we fail to see that the concepts are specific, and hence limited in their scope, and that they are actually formulated to meet the specific interest that they subserve. This is blindness. All *drṣṭis* owe their being to *satkāyadrṣṭi*.

"All the sixty-two *drṣṭis* are included in the *satkāyadrṣṭi*."<sup>21</sup>

Both the *kleśas* and *drṣṭis* have thus their origin in the false sense of self, the root-error, which consists in claiming unconditionedness for the conditioned, and imposing absoluteness on the relative. It is our ignorance and the consequent imagination of unconditionedness in regard to the conditioned that is at the root of our blindness to the limitedness of our standpoint as well as at the root of all our suffering.

"The common people, out of ignorance, seize the determinate (as the indeterminate) and this gives rise to all the

21. *ibid.*, 605b, 607b.





kleśas viz., *trṣṇa* etc., this in turn gives rise to different kinds of deeds, leading to different kinds of bodily existence and experiences of different kinds of pain and pleasure. For example, the silk-worm emits silk from within itself and gets caught within it, and in consequence suffers the pain of getting boiled up and burnt. This is just the case with the ignorant. . . . . But the wise analyses and distinguishes everything, root and branch, and finds that all things are *śūnya*. In order to help all people, he tells them of the nature of the objects of their clinging, viz., the five *skandhas* etc. . . . . He tells them: 'You have yourselves given rise to all this, and having yourselves given rise to them you yourselves cling to them (in your ignorance).'



# Axiology of Knowledge

by

DR. A. G. JAVADEKAR, M.A., PH.D.

M. S. University of Baroda.

The theory of knowledge has been approached from various points of view, such as the psychological, the logical, the sociological, the dialectical and the positivistic.

Of these, the psychological and the logical approaches, which constitute in the main the contents of what may be called the traditional epistemology, study the problem of knowledge in an abstract and hypothetical manner. Taking for granted only the bare existence of the individual mind, the psychological theory of knowledge, for example, attempts to seek the origin and the development of knowledge in the individual consciousness. The logical theory of knowledge, interested in the universal frame-work of knowledge and the criteria of truth, besides taking for granted the abstract existence of individual minds, supposes that knowledge could be fruitfully studied in an abstract and a general way independently of the concrete and specific situation in which it arises. Such an abstract and hypothetical procedure was bound to be predominantly speculative with the result that human ingenuity has created more fanciful problems than offered any actual solutions. No wonder, then, if the psychological theory of knowledge ends in subjectivism and relativism, and the logical theory of knowledge in a sterile scepticism.<sup>1</sup>

The other three approaches to the theory of knowledge are comparatively modern. The sociology of knowledge must be credited with studying the problem of knowledge in a concrete way, by taking an account of the social and the historical situation

1. For a fuller exposition of this position see the author's following articles:—

(i) "Ethical theory of knowledge," *Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress*, 1954.

(ii) "The Nature of Error", *Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress*, 1955.





in which knowledge arises. It describes the inter-relation between society and knowledge, thus bringing out the social conditioning as well as the social significance of knowledge. But, inspite of its objective and empirical approach, its generally deterministic assumptions and relativistic conclusions are far from satisfactory.<sup>2</sup>

The theory of knowledge, based on the application of the fundamental ideas of dialectical and historical materialism,<sup>3</sup> also studies the problem of knowledge in a still more concrete way, particularly emphasising the importance of human practice and co-operation, in the origin and progress of knowledge. This outlook is certainly commendable in that it gives a novel orientation to the theory of knowledge. But this theory of knowledge, inspite of its scientific professions, appears to be based on a thoroughly materialistic dogma and a very dubious Pavlovian stimulus-reflex psychology.

The theory of knowledge as revealed in the method of logical positivism becomes so very ultra-concrete, that it holds only sensuous experience as valuable, and discredits other varieties of experience, without offering a justifiable principle for such a dogmatic preference of one kind of experience to others.

The axiological theory of knowledge, or more briefly, as I propose to call it, Axionoetics,<sup>4</sup> proposes to study the problem of knowledge, firstly, by taking advantage of whatever valuable points there may be in the above theories of knowledge; secondly, by avoiding their defects briefly referred to above, thirdly, by taking a comprehensive view of the concrete knowledge situation; and fourthly, by a reorientation of the study of knowledge from the

2. For a detailed criticism of this theory, see the author's article:—"A Critique of sociology of knowledge," *Proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress*, 1953.

3. See Maurice Cornforth:—"Dialectical Materialism", Vol. 3 "The Theory of Knowledge."

4. Derived from Greek *axioō*, to deem worthy. Cornforth would not like this. In his note to the Foreword to his book referred to in the Note above, he remarks that "those who consider Greek a more philosophical language than English call it (theory of knowledge) *epistemology*, or sometimes *gnosiology*." I do not think that Greek is a more philosophical language than any other language like Sanskrit or Latin. The use of technical terms helps clarity and economy of thought. The idea does not become bourgeois because it is expressed in one word, nor does it become proletarian if it is expressed in a mass of words.



point of view of the theory of value. This last point is of central importance.

Knowledge does originate in the individual human mind. But there is a very important element of truth in the view that the so-called individual psychology is essentially a social psychology, which the psychological theory of knowledge has neglected. The human individuals and their minds do not exist, much less grow, in a void. Hence, knowledge neither originates nor flourishes in a social vacuum. It is only such a point of view that will save knowledge from solipsism. The give and take between the individual and the society, action and reaction between the mind and its environment are responsible for the birth, nourishment and growth of knowledge. Knowledge is one of the human institutions of basic importance, and as such, it is intimately related with human life and its values. All human institutions necessarily reflect human values. And just as the various human institutions could be evaluated in terms of human hopes and aspirations, so also we can make a critical evaluation of the institution of knowledge in its concrete achievements.

If we can have the respective philosophies of science, of history, of law, of religion and the like, which deal with them not so much in their formal aspects as their actual content, we can as well have a true philosophy of knowledge. The theory of knowledge, with which we are familiar, makes a formal study of knowledge, which also serves a valuable purpose in its own way, but it could not rightly be called a philosophy of knowledge. The genuine philosophy of knowledge is Axionoetics which makes a study of both the formal and material aspects of knowledge in its intimate relationship with human life. The sociology of knowledge being descriptive may supply, at the most, very valuable data for a philosophy of knowledge which is essentially interpretative and normative. The positivistic theory of knowledge is far from such a philosophy of knowledge, as it has no sense for values at all. The dialectical materialist theory of knowledge comes nearer to the conception of a philosophy of knowledge in so far as it includes according to Cornforth, the role of ideas in social life as a part of its subject matter. The theory of knowledge "helps us to evaluate our ideas, to develop them and use them as instruments of human progress."<sup>5</sup> But, unfortunately, it has a narrow conception of values which is determined by its dire materialism.

5. "Theory of Knowledge", Foreword.





The concrete knowledge situation, as Axionoetics considers it, involves reference to the knower as a social being with his physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual make-up which measures the value of the knower as a subject in relation to the object of his knowledge. Deficiency in any of these would mar the prospects of his attaining desirable truth. His social inheritance, his cultural background, or the ethics of which he is a representative, go a long way in making the knowledge situation very specific. These supply him with a set of values which he consciously or unconsciously makes use of in his investigation of truth. The general level of knowledge attained, the specific interests and the social requirements also determine the choice of the problems for knowledge, as also the means, the methods and the standards of verification pertaining to the field of investigation. Thus, in the knowledge-situation, there is not merely the triad of the knower, the means of knowledge and the object of knowledge, but the whole of this, besides being internally interdependent, moves within the perspectives supplied by the two sets of values, one determined by the scientific spirit, and the other determined by the ends or ideals which the society and the individual place before themselves. The knower ordinarily receives a great deal passively from this concrete situation in which he finds himself. For him, most of the knowledge comes through social sanction or authority. But knowledge does not grow so much by passive reception as by active contribution. The action of the knower on the environment, the change that he brings within it with a specific purpose, which he values and which he brings with him to bear upon his environment, are vastly operative in the creative activity of knowledge. Knowledge does not grow so much by accidental happenings as by planned activity; at least where there is an appearance of an accidental progress of knowledge, there is an active mind full of knowledge to recognise the worth of the accident for knowledge, and even if there is a wanton accretion of knowledge which goes on accumulating irrespective of its significance for human life and its values, the same may ultimately prove to be harmful or useless, if it is not brought within the control of desirable ends. Robert S. Lynd says "Research without an actively selective point of view becomes the dirty bag of an idiot, filled with bits of pebbles, straws, feathers and other random hoardings. If nobody goes about endlessly counting throughout a life-time the number of particles of sand along infinite miles of seashore over all the coasts of the world, why is this? Because there is no point to it, no need to complete



this particular aspect of the jigsaw puzzle of the unknown."<sup>6</sup> This convincingly shows how knowledge cannot be merely for the sake of knowledge, it must have a sufficient interest for man.

It is such a concrete study of the human institution of knowledge, in the perspective of values, in which it originates the value in which it sustains itself and the values into which it results, that constitutes the chief point of interest for Axionetics.

In order to justify this new enquiry the various ways in which value seems to be very pertinent to knowledge may be indicated.

(1) The most obvious consideration is that knowledge itself constitutes a value. It is something worthy of human attainment. The more of it the better for the individual and society.

(2) If knowledge has an intrinsic value, does it necessarily mean that all knowledge is of equal value? It will be seen that all knowledge is not uniformly valuable. The value of knowledge depends upon the stage of knowledge and the objects of knowledge. Regarding both of these points there may be a difference of opinion, but the fact remains that all knowledge is not equally valuable. Thus, for instance, as Comte suggests, knowledge grows in value as it passes through the successive stages of mythology, metaphysics and science. According to another point of view, the object of our knowledge gives value to that knowledge; the most valuable object of knowledge being God, or nature, or man. According to a very strong tradition self-knowledge is the highest knowledge. Whatever point of view we may take, it is clear that the value of knowledge has itself to be judged in terms of a certain standard of valuation.

(3) In so far as knowledge itself is submitted to valuation in terms of certain standards of values, these themselves may be consciously or unconsciously entertained by a given society. In this sense, knowledge in the form of a set of beliefs entertained by that society is reflective of the social ethos involving ideas, sentiments and ideals which constitute a system of values. Knowledge comes to be judged in terms of these latent values.

(4) Even though we talk of social ethos or culture which forms a norm for the common men in a given social group, some superior individuals transcend this norm. These individuals who have a

6. *Knowledge for what?* p. 183.





greater keenness for values may help the society to see a greater extension and intension of the values, or may even help it towards a transvaluation of values. Such individuals become the reformers of society. Thus progress is made possible by effective leaders of society, whose knowledge, point of view, or insight could be valued in terms of their worthy or unworthy personalities. In this sense, the value of an individual in the capacity of a knower measures the value of his knowledge.

(5) Knowledge is a result of the cognitive activity, and like every human activity involves a purpose. The activity of knowledge therefore, is meaningful only in relation to the consciousness of a value that constitutes its goal. This cognitive goal is generally recognised as a truth-value. With reference to science, for instance, it is said that "the institutional goal of science is the extension of certified knowledge."<sup>7</sup>

(6) The disinterested pursuit of knowledge to gain such a truth-value itself constitutes a value. This involves the recognition of the methodological procedure of a scientific spirit as a value. R. K. Merton speaks of it as the "ethos of science" or "mores of science" as determined by the goal and method of science. He suggests that an ethical value is implied in these mores. "The mores of science possess a methodological rationale, but they are binding, not because they are procedurally efficient but because they are believed right and good. They are moral not technical prescriptions."<sup>8</sup>

(7) The nature of this ethos is bound to vary from field to field since all the fields of knowledge are not analogous in their subject-matter. The nature of the methodological rationale that is binding upon the seeker of truth-value is determined by the nature of the subject-matter. Axionoetics should consider how these mores vary in different fields of investigation. To consider that the values involved in the ethos of one science constitute a model for every other science and forms of knowledge to follow is to disregard the truth-value itself.

(8) The theoretical problems that the truth-seeker attempts to solve originate in the practical life. The theoretical activity of man is surrounded by the practical activity of man. The dialectical

7. R. K. Merton: *"Social theory and Social Structure,"* p. 309.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 309.

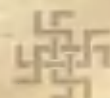


materialist theory of knowledge even goes to the length of asserting the unity of theory and practice, of knowing and doing. Hence Lenin wrote "The standpoint of life, of practice should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge."<sup>9</sup> It is inevitable, therefore, that in the background of the theoretical purpose there is perhaps a more important practical purpose arising out of human life and its values. Whatever be the system of values inherent in the ethos of science, it will have to be quite in conformity with the fundamental human values. Every human vocation has its specific ethical code or system of values. The mores of science are only one instance amongst other such systems of values which can only be the specific expressions of the universal system of human values.

(9) Even if knowledge is not directly pursued for the realization of certain ulterior ends, when a certain truth-value is reached, it is bound to affect the research worker and the society in general. The disinterested pursuit of knowledge does not mean that the knowledge remains indifferent to life. Nor can life, from which knowledge springs, remain indifferent to what knowledge has to offer it, whether it wants it or not. The utilitarian motive may not, in some cases, be the spring of knowledge; but when knowledge is somehow made available, human life is bound to take cognisance of it, and thus knowledge comes to be applied. In this way knowledge does affect life. In fact, a knowledge which does not directly or indirectly affect life is meaningless, being devoid of value. The role of knowledge in setting new values and upsetting the cherished ones can hardly be denied. The building of character, whether in the case of an individual or in the case of society, when we come to speak of culture, consists in the assimilation and revelation of certain values in the life whether of an individual or of a society.

(10) Knowledge thus evidently stands in relation to other values. The values may be independent of one another in the sense of their mutual irreducibility. But this does not mean that they are unrelated. Thus, for instance, the basic values of truth, beauty and goodness are irreducible to one another, nevertheless they enter into intimate interrelationships. This is because the source of all these values is in the unity of human life and experience. So that, even under what appears superficially as plurality of values there is a basic unity of their organisation in human experience.

9. "Materialism and Empirico-criticism," ch. 2, sec. 6.





It is idle and irresponsible to talk of their mutual exclusiveness or indifference simply because of their irreducible character. In this sense, knowledge and its truth-value are in real relationship with other values. It is not sufficient, therefore, to value knowledge in terms of its truth-value, but it is also necessary to value knowledge in terms of its relation to other values. That is, a truth ultimately must be shown to be a *desirable* truth, because of its power of truly enriching life by the promotion of other values. Truth-value of knowledge is, therefore, the minimum, not the maximum, value of knowledge. The maximum value of knowledge lies in its being in organic relationship with human values in general.

(11) Lastly, the concept of fact or being to be known involves as its essence a reference to value. There is nothing like a fact *and* a value. Facts *are* values. Prof. Sorley,<sup>10</sup> for instance, considers God as the embodiment of values, and that reality has a moral constitution through and through. According to Hartmann,<sup>11</sup> value is the genuine first mover, the first entelechy, the power behind that which ought-to-be, in fact, the centre of gravity of existence. Being, knowledge and value, therefore, in this sense, constitute three aspects of the same reality. To ignore value is to ignore existence as well as knowledge.

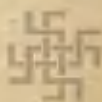
To-day when we find ourselves in a state of crisis for which our knowledge is responsible, let us take heed of Dr. P. A. Sorokin's advice.

"Since man and his values are sacred, the relationship of man to man should be guided by sublime love, as the categorical imperative; since truth, goodness and beauty are absolute values, any further relativization of these, any further degradation to a mere arbitrary convention, becomes out of place. Being one, science cannot claim complete freedom from the control of goodness and beauty, and therefore cannot and should not serve evil purposes.... The same principle applies to art."<sup>12</sup>

10. *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 515.

11. *Ethics*, pp. 272-73.

12. *The Crisis of Our Age*, p. 317.



## Towards Re-Orienting Indian Philosophy— Hints from a Thomist

by

RICHARD V. DE SMET, S.J., Ph.D.  
*De Nobili College, Poona, 6*

The problem of re-orientation proposed for our discussion by the organisers of this Philosophical Congress arises periodically, born of the very freedom of Philosophy and the multiplicity of paths which the human mind can explore in its ever renewed quest for ultimate truth.

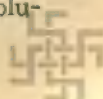
It was urged upon the Catholic Church about a century ago, and it may be of interest to consider the reform then undertaken and successfully pursued ever since.

The fermentation of thought during the three previous centuries, the discovery of other civilizations, the youthful efflorescence of the positive sciences, the upheaval of the French and subsequent revolutions, the growing importance of history and evolution in all fields of science, these were the main factors which had brought confusion in the philosophical thought and teaching of many. The number and magnitude of the new problems raised in modern times made some teachers too shy, hence either sceptical or dogmatic, others too bold and adventurous. This wavering affected also the teachers in hundreds of Catholic Institutes of Philosophy scattered all over the world.

Hence it had become imperative to reascertain the aim of the philosophical investigation, the soundness of its foundations, the adequacy of its method, the universality of its outlook, and the truth of its propositions.

It was found that for this tremendous undertaking no better guide could be followed than Saint Thomas Aquinas whose teaching had combined deep metaphysical insight, certainty of method, clarity and balance of expression, catholicity of outlook and, above all, love for truth and intellectual honesty.

However, this return to a master of the thirteenth century should not be a going backwards, a restoration merely of an antiquated body of doctrines. Thomism had been essentially a revolu-





tion, a new synthesis, a genetic mutation. Most of its elements might be found in Aristotle or the Stoics, in Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius or the other Christian Fathers, in Ibn Sinā, Ibn Roshd or Rabbi Moses, but they had been critically digested, purified and integrated into a new doctrine, specifically different from them all, because it transcended them by its universality and admirable consistency.

Hence Thomism was to be restored not only in its principles, method and essential theses, but also in its spirit. Just as it had been a critical synthesis of all the philosophical traditions known by Aquinas, it was to be in our time a common endeavour to integrate critically Cartesianism and English Empiricism, Kantism and Transcendentalism, Positivism and Modern Sciences, Confucianism and the Philosophies of India, Aesthetics and the Social Sciences.

The task to be done was tremendous but it began in earnest in all parts of the world as soon as Pope Leo XIII gave it the initial impetus by his decision of August the fourth, 1879, known as the encyclical letter "*Aeterni Patris*."

Critical editions were prepared. Historians delved extensively into the maze of published and unpublished documents concerning the evolution of Medieval thought. On this solid basis Thomism and cognate doctrines were expounded historically and critically. And having thus recovered their authentic tradition, the new Thomists produced original treatises in Metaphysics, Ethics, Psychology, Philosophy of Religion, of Culture, of Nature and Sciences, Aesthetics, Law, Sociology and Social Economics.

It is but natural that most of these works were written by Continental European scholars and remained for a long time almost ignored by English-speaking philosophers. But for the last thirty odd years they have appeared in considerable number in the English book market. Not only translations, but original articles and treatises by English-speaking Thomists are now coming out of the presses with increasing frequency.

The *Bibliographie Thomiste*, published in 1921 by Mandonnet and Destrez and covering the period from 1800 to 1920, counted 2219 titles. The *Thomistic Bibliography*, published in 1945 by V. J. Bourke, covers only the years 1920-1940 but gives 4764 titles. With the increase of the years 1940-1956 this whole production has greatly exceeded the 10,000 mark.



Thomistic works are of course far from being all masterpieces, but the best ones among them have in common a set of qualities which characterizes them as the philosophical literature of our time.

First, they are extremely careful to distinguish the proper scope of the various sciences. For instance, Metaphysics is neither theology, nor faith, nor experimental science. Neither is it history nor poetical experience. But it is the purely rational science of being as being. Its subject-matter is not the mere notion of being, but any existent insofar as, and to whatever degree, it verifies this notion of being.

Second, they eschew unproved postulates and require a solid basis of evidence for the starting point and the fundamental principles of their science.

Third, they carefully define their terms and indicate all the steps of their demonstrations. This is sometimes apt to irritate those who prefer to rely upon their "intuition" to jump to obscure conclusions, but it is a sign both of intellectual honesty and of respect for the reader.

Fourth, their healthy confidence in the human power of reaching truth and even absolute truth in Metaphysics is not a blind belief but the conclusion of a critical enquiry sufficiently complete to overcome the qualified scepticism of Kant or any form of radical scepticism.

Fifth, they have, after the misinterpretations of several centuries, found anew the authentic meaning of "act" and "potency" according to Aristotle and Aquinas. With this wonderful tool of analysis they are able to solve the apparent antinomies of multiplicity, finitude, imperfection, movement, etc. at the various levels of being.

Sixth, they have a consistent theory of the analogy of human knowledge in which they easily integrate the valuable discoveries of Neo-Positivists and Analysts of Language while overcoming the rigidity of their limiting categories. This theory of analogy shows how our power of signifying (hence, of affirming) extends much beyond our power of representing; thus it opens to the scientific investigation of Philosophy the whole realm of the metempirical.

Seventh, because the theory of analogy shows that the exact singularity (or, in some cases, personality) of most beings is but indirectly accessible to Philosophy, their doctrine is never closed



in upon itself but permits itself to be completed by other kinds of exact knowledge, such as Mathematics and the Natural Sciences, History and even Divine Revelation, if it is proved to be credible that such a revelation exists.

Eighth, relying upon Aquinas's principle that truth cannot contradict truth and that no error is such that it does not imply some truth, they critically welcome positions and doctrines different from their own and are especially ready to learn from the other philosophical traditions of mankind. They may have to condemn what, on the solid basis of truth which they have secured, they deem erroneous, but they endeavour rather to complete than to destroy. Thus their system is to be likened not to a closed circle but to a spiral, always intent on expanding itself.

Ninth, they do not try to be original, but true. And they are convinced that the best way to be true is to work together with all the other philosophers, both of the past and of the present and to keep the dialogue with them always open. With their own colleagues, they work in an even closer collaboration and thus form what can be called, not in a pejorative but in the best sense of the term, a school.

I wish now to derive from this brief sketch of the renovation of Thomism a few suggestions which may help those concerned with the present situation of Indian Philosophy.

Since contemporary Thomism shows that it is possible to revive valuable doctrines of the past without being "reactionary", and to synthesize diverse currents of thought without adulterating the intrinsic unity of an open system, I propose that a critical examination of the Indian legacy in Philosophy be pursued by a common effort of all of us in order to discover the "perennial philosophy" immanent in this heritage, in spite of the mutual opposition of its many currents. In the spirit of that basic philosophy it would then be possible to elaborate a full synthesis, at the same time universal and authentically Indian.

I shall even venture to propose for your consideration a few elements which, in my opinion, are integral parts of the fundamental outline of such a synthesis.

(1) The unhampered freedom and the rational fervour which, beyond the dogmatic systematization of the Exegetes, characterized philosophical investigation during the Upaniṣadic period. The *Śruti* was then "being made" by remarkably deep and independent

thinkers; it was not yet believed to be the untouchable and infallible *śabda*, which Mimāṃsakas conceived as eternally self-subsistent in the manner of Plato's ideas.

(2) Together with that freedom, the recognition that our power of knowing is naturally limited and stands in need of a *pramāṇa* such as *śabda* in order to reach its full possible scope. Though found in a somewhat exaggerated form in Śaṅkara and other Advaitins, this admission is in itself extremely valuable and will help us to avoid rationalistic pride and to remain open to the possibility of an infallible revelation.

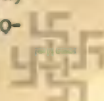
(3) Reliance upon experience as the only solid ground for any attempt at ultimate explanations. It is found as such in most *darśanas*, except the *śrutivādas*, and even in the reasoning or *manana* part of the latter.

(4) A firm grasp of the first principles of all human knowledge, such as the principles of identity, contradiction, syllogism, causality, which are implied in that experience. Their theory is found partly in the doctrine of *pramāṇas*, to which almost all the Indian thinkers of the past have devoted a good amount of careful attention, and partly in statements scattered through the works of Śaṅkara and other great *ācāryas*. The form of metempirical relativism which is so current today can hardly boast of any patents of nobility older than the nineteenth century and is ultimately of foreign extraction.

(5) The method of reflective analysis which consists in deriving from experience, according to the laws expressed in the first principles, all the theses of Metaphysics as the necessary conditions of that experience. Among the many who have practised it, the Sāṃkhyas and the Vedāntins in the *manana* part of their *bhāṣyas* have been the most conscious of its possibilities and the most consistent in its use.

(6) The concern with proper definitions, right divisions, strict reasoning, which is so characteristic of the classical thinkers of India that it allows us to speak of them as the "Schoolmen" of India.

(7) The theory of the various meanings of terms in a given context and particularly of *lakṣaṇā* which justifies the metaphysician's pretension of being able to reach and to signify with words realities which cannot be expressed properly by any words (*lakṣyate na tūcyate*, as Śaṅkara says in *Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣya*, 2. 1). This theory developed by the Grammarians and Rhetor-





ricians, has been integrated into Philosophy by Śaṅkara and his direct followers. Its revival would allow us to meet the challenge of Philosophical Analysis with an adequate instrument.

(8) The desire of knowing the ultimate Reality, which properly defines the undertaking of the Vedāntins, and with some qualification that of the other so-called orthodox thinkers.

(9) The conception of this Absolute as the total Cause from which everything else is produced, by which it is preserved and in which it finds its accomplishment, according to the teaching of the *Brahmasūtra*. The causality of such a metempirical Principle is not easy to conceive. Its explanation in terms of the Sāṃkhya *Pariṇāmavāda* was found inadequate by Śaṅkara, though he had to use such terms for lack of any better technical vocabulary. He therefore tried to overcome their inadequacy with the help of metaphors which signified his intention of asserting the complete transcendence of the Supreme Cause as well as its most intimate immanence in the *jīvātman* and the rest of the world. In the wake of his own effort, his disciples elaborated *vivartavāda* which is surely a more adequate, though still imperfect, theory of the total causality of the independent Absolute. It is, in my opinion, at the level of this formulation that our attempt to find an improved expression of it should take its departure.

(10) The consequent conception of all beings other than the transcendent and unchanging Absolute as "*sadasadvilakṣaṇa*", i.e., as to be defined neither by 'being' in the supreme sense (*paramārtha*) of the term, nor by 'non-being' in the supreme sense of the term. More positively this means that, without being absolute nothing, they are beings in an analogous sense only. Indeed, they do not exist independently but in total dependence upon the only Being which is such by its very essence, and what they are is but an imperfect participation in its fulness. Hence it is ignorance to conceive them as absolutes over against the supreme Being, since they are totally related to It, whereas, the supreme Being, even as their Cause, is entirely independent of them. For It is One, without a second, and *dvaita* is mere error.

(11) The realization that total dependence does not refer to existence only, but also to any activity by which dependent beings develop their own reality and that, for instance, the total Cause of our existence is also the supreme Illuminator of our intellect and the supreme Mover of our will and is therefore our innermost *Ātman*, in the supreme sense of this term (*paramārthataḥ*).



(12) The truth of Śaṅkara's assertion that "the object of our desire for knowledge is the knowledge of *Brahman* up to its complete comprehension, . . . . . for the complete comprehension of *Brahman* is the highest end of man" (*Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, 1. 1). *Brahman* therefore cannot be designated as impersonal for the proper end of man cannot be of a lower perfection than man himself and man is personal. We may call our supreme End 'transpersonal' if we mean by this absolutely and supremely personal, but never 'impersonal' unless we force this term to mean 'not anthropomorphic', which is not its proper meaning. In the Christian tradition to which it properly belongs, the term 'person' designates any being of intellectual and free nature. Like all other terms which we apply to God analogically or by *lakṣaṇā*, this term also has first to be purified from all its imperfect connotations (*neti, neti*), and then elevated to its supreme sense (*paramārtha*); but, since in its very definition it designates nothing but perfection, it should be attributed to *Brahman* according to its positive content, not metaphorically only and, still less, negatively. In this connection, it should be noted that 'impersonal' is not the proper rendering of '*nirguṇa*' which simply purports to remove from the simplicity of the Supreme even that form of inner complexity which consists in being endowed with attributes distinct from the subject itself. To conceive *Brahman* as personal is to conceive It as *being*, in an absolutely simple way (*akhaṇḍa*), Reality, Knowledge, etc. ("*Satyam jñānamantaṁ Brahma*", *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, 2. 1), whereas to conceive It as *having* them is to conceive It anthropomorphically or as *saguṇa*.

I do not pretend to have encompassed in these 12 points the whole of that perennial philosophy which I discover in the Indian legacy. It is obvious that it contains besides these a number of other elements of permanent value concerning not only general Metaphysics, but also Psychology, Cosmology and Ethics. I only offer these as a series of basic assertions upon the truth of which it does not seem impossible to obtain the unanimous agreement of contemporary Indian thinkers. As it contains statements of principles and method as well as a few metaphysical theses, it already expresses a certain outlook and spirit in conformity with which it can be developed into a fully articulated body of philosophy which might be the Indian philosophy of to-morrow.





## Does Indian Philosophy Need Re-Orientation ?

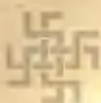
by

NARSINGH NARAIN

In discussing the philosophy of Dr. Radhakrishnan, our most eminent contemporary philosopher, Prof. D. M. Datta says: "Metaphysics is to him, as to the ancient Indian philosophers, only a rational preparation for the solution of life's problems."<sup>1</sup> This practical bias of Indian philosophy is claimed to be its main distinguishing feature. In the West, we are told, philosophy is merely an intellectual pursuit, having no necessary moral or spiritual implications. In India the philosophical quest is a means to the attainment of the highest spiritual aims. We are further told that Indian thinkers emphasize the need for physical, mental and moral discipline on which the vision of philosophical truth and the achievement of spiritual poise and progress alike depend. For this reason the different traditional schools of Indian philosophy were at the same time the bases of different religious sects—they constituted the religions of the intellectual elite. Philosophy arose out of religion and never detached itself from it. While it is true that one could be religious without being philosophical, there was no philosophy unconnected with religion.

To the above general statement two exceptions must be made. In one case we have philosophy without religion and in the other religion without philosophy. The first is the Cārvāka school (materialists). Unfortunately no exposition of the Cārvāka philosophy by a follower of that school has survived, and we have to depend for a knowledge of their views on the works of their opponents who have set forth the materialist position for purposes of refutation. But it is clear that materialism, with its rejection of future life and the ideal of salvation, could not have formed the basis of a religion in the sense in which religion was then and is still generally understood. In ancient India, as in the West until quite recently, and in several quarters even to-day, materialism has generally been regarded as synonymous with wickedness. The virtuous materialists presented a problem to ancient Indians, as

1. *The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 146.



they even now do to many religious people. We are told nowadays that people who call themselves materialists but live a virtuous life are materialists only in theory, as we are told also that atheists who lead a good life accept God in practice, despite their verbal assertions. On the other hand, we find professed followers of religion, and even the Church, being sometimes accused of implicit materialism, the basis of accusation being their concentration on humanistic this-worldly ideals and their loss of active interest in the religious ideal of salvation. Materialism was given the status of philosophy in ancient India because it was an argumentative and outspoken rejection of religion and had to be answered. We can also ignore Indian materialism because, unlike most other schools of Indian philosophy, it ceased to be a living force long ago. In so far as materialism is to be found in India today its inspiration is purely Western.

The second and far more important exception is Buddhism, as propounded by Buddha himself. The anti-metaphysical attitude of Buddha is well-known and has been a subject of much and varied comment. Among the questions he refused to answer or discuss were the existence of God or Brahman, whether the soul and the body are identical or different, and personal immortality. His silence has been interpreted differently by different scholars. Several scholars hold, for instance, that Buddha's silence about God does not mean denial. They may be right, but that would not alter the fact that the things about which he chose to remain silent were no part of his religion. Whether Buddha was at heart a theist, an atheist or an agnostic, it is clear that his religion was indifferent to those 'isms.' It is true that Buddha accepted certain propositions which may be regarded as metaphysical, such as the doctrines of karma and re-incarnation, though in a somewhat different form from that prevalent in his time. If that makes him a philosopher, every one is a philosopher, for every one accepts, or forms, some ideas about the nature of the world in which we live. But it really serves no useful purpose to use the word philosophy in this extended sense. The early Vedic religion was unphilosophical (not entirely, for no religion can be entirely so) because philosophy had not yet developed. Buddha eschewed philosophy deliberately, or reduced it to a minimum because, to quote his own words in the famous dialogue with Malunkyaputta, "this profits not, nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom,



and Nirvana."<sup>2</sup> He neither discussed the nature of the ultimate reality, nor its relation to the world of common experience, nor the origin of the world—questions which loom so large in the various schools of Indian philosophy, particularly in the Vedanta, the most influential of them all, so influential indeed that it may almost be called *the* philosophy of India at the present time.

It may be mentioned here that even in the West the growth of philosophy as an independent study, untrammelled by religious needs and considerations, is a recent thing. Prof. A. N. Whitehead has observed that Aristotle was "the last European metaphysician of first rate importance" who can be said to have been "entirely dispassionate" in his consideration of the question of God. After him "ethical and religious interests began to influence metaphysical conclusions".<sup>3</sup> Mr. Bertrand Russell would not exempt even Aristotle and Plato. "Philosophers from Plato to William James," he says, "have allowed their opinions as to the constitution of the universe to be influenced by the desire for edification: knowing, as they supposed, what beliefs would make men virtuous, they have invented arguments, often very sophistical, to prove that these beliefs are true."<sup>4</sup> The alliance between philosophy and religion in India may or may not merit such a description, but the point is that the fusion of the two is not altogether a peculiarly Indian problem. The question is whether such fusion is a satisfactory arrangement.

In posing this question it is not assumed that either philosophy or religion can function in water-tight compartments. We are not thinking in terms of a complete separation of the two pursuits but only inquiring whether the sort of union that exists between them in the Indian schools generally is sound and feasible. Some other possible misapprehensions must be cleared up. We do not propose to discuss here the materialist position that the religious goal of salvation is a mirage, for if that position were accepted religion would have to be dropped altogether and there would be no question of it and philosophy being a joint or separate pursuit. We shall also not question the proposition that the pursuit of the religious ideal possesses a higher value than any merely intellectual quest. And if that ideal can best be furthered by the kind of intimate alliance between philosophy and religion which

2. H. C. Warren's translation.

3. *Science and the Modern World*.

4. *A History of Western Philosophy*, p. 863.



we are here examining, let that alliance continue by all means. And as regards philosophy itself, if it is said that a purely intellectual inquiry cannot lead it to the highest goal, I would like to demur, but would say that there is no such thing as a purely intellectual philosophy anywhere. There is a great deal of truth in F. H. Bradley's famous epigram: "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct." Our views are shaped and influenced by all kinds of factors which never find a place in our conscious cognitions. Perhaps even such things as the state of our organs, the character and the quantity of our internal secretions and our longforgotten childhood experiences play a part in shaping our philosophy of life. And for philosophy the philosopher himself is part of the data, because the philosopher is concerned with the total reality, not with certain partial aspects of it. Suppose there is a man who has never loved anyone, whose heart has never gone out to another in distress, he has missed an aspect of reality which no amount of intellectual acumen can supply.

On the other hand, the approach to philosophy is not through faith, as in the case of religion, but through free inquiry born out of curiosity, as in science. The subject-matters of science and philosophy may be different in character, requiring therefore different techniques for dealing with them, but there is a great deal more in common between philosophy and science than between philosophy and religion. The attitude in which science and philosophy have to be approached is the same, namely a readiness to accept facts without being influenced by our wishes and goals and preconceived notions. As Prof. Julian Huxley has put it "One of the main achievements of science has been to reveal that the facts of nature frequently fail to accord either with the wishes or with the apparently logical preconceptions of human beings."<sup>5</sup> Science may be dealing with the outside of things and not with their "inner soul", as poet Tagore observed, but in the process of doing so it has revealed something about ourselves which cannot be dismissed as lightly as philosophers are often inclined to dismiss scientific facts and theories as of no real significance. It has drawn attention to the limitations of human faculties even at their best. It may be objected that this comment cannot apply to the intuitions of the saints. The answer is that, without questioning the reality or value of these intuitions, there is ample evidence to show that they are no more infallible than the powers of preception and comprehension possessed by ordinary human beings. For instance, the

5. *Evolution: The Modern Synthesis*, p. 456.





rigid atheistic pluralism of the Jaina saints stands in sharp contrast with the Vedanta monism in its several forms, all of which have been propounded by saints. Logic and intuition are both good instruments for unravelling the mysteries of existence, but mankind, both in the East and in the West, came to place an excessive reliance on them, thus retarding the progress of both science and philosophy. Whether we proceed by reasoning or by intuition we come up against brute facts which disturb our neat theories.

Religious initiation everywhere starts with the assumption that one or more persons have reached the vision of the highest truth beyond which there is nothing left to be known or realized. All we have to do is to follow the path blazed by them. That is the first article of faith to which the aspirants are expected to subscribe. The metaphysical propositions placed before them are not merely the results of reasoning applied to the experiences of life but the deliverances of prophets or saints who have had direct perception of the highest truth. If you have doubts about these, logic will not help you—sit down and meditate until conviction is achieved. Since there is no question of independent verification, every one eventually becomes convinced of the metaphysical tenets of his own particular sect. While there is a remarkable similarity both in the conception of the goal of life and in the discipline prescribed for attaining it, among the different schools of Indian philosophy, their metaphysical positions are substantially at variance with one another. But every one gets drilled into acceptance of the metaphysics of his own school. Such regimentation of thought, even if salutary in intent when associated with religion or politics, should be entirely foreign to the spirit of philosophy. It frowns upon doubt and disbelief, and in the religious tradition everywhere unbelievers are threatened with dire punishment. Since we are here concerned with Indian philosophy, we need only refer to the Gīta verse which runs as follows: "But the man who is ignorant, who is of a doubting nature, perishes. For the doubting soul, there is neither this world nor the world beyond nor any happiness."<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Radhakrishnan explains that "faith (Sradhdhā) is not blind belief. It is the aspiration of the soul to gain wisdom. It is the reflection in the empirical self of the wisdom that dwells in the deepest levels of our being." But this is not the sense in which



one hears the word "sraddhā" used in religious discourses and elsewhere. In the *Viveka Chudāmani*, for instance, Śaṅkara says that sraddhā consists in accepting the words of the Sāstrās and the guru as true. Another commentator, Sri S. K. Prem, a yogi, says that "the doubt referred to here is no mere intellectual doubt, which is the precursor of any advance in knowledge—. It is the doubt of the reality of what has once been perceived..."<sup>7</sup> Whatever one may think of these explanations, it is obvious that the approach by faith is not the right approach for philosophy. When philosophy and religion are lumped together, whether in India or elsewhere, the former tends to become sacrosanct like divine revelation and to degenerate into a barren exercise in the interpretation of texts. It loses its freshness and virility and lives too much in the past. We in India have been concerned too much with proving, to ourselves and the outside world, what is quite true, that the intellectual quality, the breadth of vision and the flights of speculation displayed by our ancestors can compare favourably with anything to be found in the rest of the world. In a country awakening after a long night of political subjection and intellectual stagnation, such self-assertion is natural and necessary, but can be overdone, and continued too long.

It has been said that Indian thinkers, by reason of their intimate acquaintance with both Indian and Western philosophy, are specially fitted to evolve a synthetic world-view which combines and takes account of the best features of both. But this role can only be fulfilled if philosophy becomes an independent pursuit, unfettered by any practical considerations and unhampered by any feelings of loyalty to ancient thought, however great. For philosophy, as for science, anything in the nature of a regional patriotism should be quite out of place. It may be a good postulate for religion that the highest truth and the way to its realization are already known, that the destination and the road to it are fixed for all time to come and we have only to muster up our courage to embark upon the arduous journey and persist in our exertions. For philosophy this is a fatal presupposition.

The bulk of contemporary Indian philosophy, where it is philosophy proper and not simply a handmaid to religion, is concerned with history and interpretation. The rest is mostly occupied with the pleasant task of reconciling divergent ways of thought which, it is claimed, is calculated to advance the spiritual solidarity of

7. *The Yoga of the Bhagavat Gita.*





mankind. There is, however, a careful avoidance of anything which may be construed as a criticism of deeply cherished religious beliefs. The desire not to hurt the feelings of others is no doubt most admirable, but unfortunately philosophy cannot afford to be other than completely frank without stultifying itself. The sense of unity of all mankind and indeed of all existence, has been felt by many individuals in all parts of the world and more specially by mystics. But the effort to build up a metaphysics on the basis of it has taken different forms which have their points of agreement as well as differences; and no purpose is served by emphasizing the former and glossing over the latter. The conviction of such unity is not derived from metaphysics, nor does its value depend upon the kind of metaphysics we erect on it. Moreover, the function of religion is not to give a metaphysical formulation of that unity but to help us conduct our living in accordance with it.

Similarly there seems to be an inborn optimism in the human breast which makes us feel that in the end all must be well, that there is a moral order at the back of the world of common experience. Some hold that this is only wishful thinking and has no correspondence with reality. However that may be, we are here concerned with the fact that this human optimism (or wishful thinking, if you will) has assumed many concrete shapes in the hands of theologians and philosophers. Religion springs from this optimism but is not wedded to any of the particular systems of beliefs in which that optimism finds concrete expression. Even our conception of the goal of life cannot be regarded as sacrosanct. We are witnessing at present, for instance, a conflict between two conceptions of the goal of life, which is perhaps best expressed by the antithesis between what Dr. Schweitzer has called 'world-and-life-negation' and "world-and-life-affirmation". They are not mutually exclusive but the conflict is real; Dr. Radhakrishnan has described it as a conflict between religion and self-sufficient humanism.<sup>8</sup>

When religion and philosophy are lumped together, philosophers are prone to define philosophy in the light of their own religious inclinations or convictions. In the beginning of this essay we referred to the standpoint of Dr. Radhakrishnan. Here is a definition of philosophy by an Indian philosopher belonging to a later generation, Prof. T. R. V. Murti:

8. *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*.



That philosophy is not an affair of intellectual curiosity or analysis but a serious spiritual discipline (sādhana) directed towards the attainment of Freedom is basic to Indian Philosophy and I subscribe to it without reservation.<sup>9</sup>

This definition completely identifies philosophy with religion, or rather with that path of religion which in the Vedānta system is known as Jñāna Yoga. For if philosophy is a spiritual discipline for the attainment of Freedom, there is no function left for religion to perform, and the two words become synonymous. If the line of reasoning adopted in this essay is correct, philosophy should be nothing more than a systematic effort at the formulation of a world-view by taking into account all the available data both in the shape of our knowledge of the external world and of our inner experiences. And so great are our ignorance and our limitations that even when one feels absolutely convinced of one particular world-view, one must recognise that it is liable to undergo revision with the growth of knowledge and understanding. The pursuit of the highest practical ideals is, of course, open to philosophers and non-philosophers alike. Philosophy can best play its part in the shaping of these ideals and in the furthering of humanity's practical interests in the highest sense by confining itself to its own proper objective, namely the search for as comprehensive a vision of truth as our present faculties and the knowledge at our disposal will permit.

9. *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 457.





# The Alleged Unreality of Time

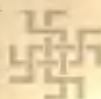
by

D. Y. DESHPANDE

The question of the reality of time is very old. In western philosophy it is as old as Parmenides, and in the eastern it is probably even older. For over two thousand years a long series of distinguished philosophers have produced reasons calculated to disprove the reality of time. And though there have been counter-attacks from the realist camp, the general impression one is apt to have of the controversy is that on the whole the "unrealists" have carried the day. It might be thought that little if anything worthwhile can be added to that endless controversy. Nevertheless I venture to suggest that it is possible to give one or two arguments which can settle the question more or less decisively against the unrealists. The arguments are not (I am afraid) new; but the times are less mistrustful of time, and so there might be a greater possibility of some of the old arguments carrying conviction.

1. It is admitted by all (including the unrealists) that we do experience temporal succession. That events are experienced as happening one after another is what everybody will allow. Those who hold time to be unreal freely admit that it is experienced; only they maintain that that is all the reality time has. They maintain, in other words, that time is only a mode of *appearance*; it is not a mode of being. For a number of reasons (which are well-known) it is held that the real must be timeless; and since succession is nevertheless experienced and cannot be dismissed as the figment of the imagination, it is declared to be at best an appearance of a timeless reality. To the question why the timeless should appear to us *sub specie temporis*, the general answer given is that the temporal appearance must be due to some imperfection in our cognitive apparatus. Our perception of the temporal is thus really the misperception of the timeless.

2. The reasons put forth to prove that the real cannot be temporal are too numerous to be dealt with here. In this paper I shall suppose them to have been successful in proving their point and shall confine myself to pointing out one or two difficulties in the unrealist thesis.



3. The first of these difficulties is the following. The unrealists hold that what is timeless is perceived by the human understanding as temporal. But the following consideration should make this view look extremely suspicious. Even with such cognitive faculties as we possess (and God knows they are far from perfect!) We seem quite able to apprehend timeless things. For example a mathematical series such as the series of natural numbers is a timeless series. The natural numbers are said to form a timeless series because they do not succeed one another like events. They have a definite order, of course; for each number has its own place which it cannot exchange with any other number. Nevertheless the series they form is not successive because the numbers do not come into existence one after another and then pass away. Indeed they do not come into existence at all, for they are not the kind of things which come into existence. No doubt we apprehend the numbers successively; but we also perceive that the relation which generates the series is non-temporal. The timelessness of the number-series is thus quite compatible with the successive knowledge of its terms. That is to say, we draw a clear distinction between the fact that certain terms are successive and that they are successively perceived.

4. Now if this point is granted, the question at once arises: If the human mind is able to apprehend timelessness, are we justified in thinking that succession is a mode of appearance only, and not of reality also? If we were incapable of apprehending timelessness, there might be some justification for suggesting that the timeless appears to us as temporal owing to our cognitive imperfections. But if with even the meagre apparatus that we possess we are well able to perceive eternity, the fact that we perceive something as successive would be strong evidence that the reality perceived was itself successive and not eternal.

5. Now the sole reason given for thinking that succession is an appearance of a timeless reality is the alleged contradictions involved in the notion of succession which have been pointed out by a long line of philosophers from Parmenides to McTaggart. If those contradictions are really involved in the notion of succession, then notwithstanding the fact that succession is undoubtedly perceived we should find it really hard to uphold the reality of succession. But it may be doubted whether any of those alleged difficulties is really insoluble; and if they are not, then the representation of time as the moving image of eternity loses all its cog-

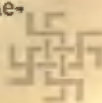


ency. However it is not my intention in this paper to enter upon an examination of those alleged difficulties involved in the concept of time. What I propose to do, as I have said before, is to show the difficulties involved in the alternative proposed by the unrealists.

6. This brings me to the second of my arguments. Let us grant that the perceived succession is only an appearance of a timeless reality, that in reality nothing happens and nothing follows anything. Let us grant that there is succession only in our apprehension of reality. But then what are we to say of this succession in our apprehension? That our experience is successive is, I think, beyond doubt. But if succession is riddled with contradiction and therefore at best only an appearance of a timeless reality, then the succession in experience can be no more real than the succession in objects; and the succession in experience will have to be declared to be no more than an appearance of the timeless.

7. It will be worth while to stop here and try to understand clearly what can be meant by this conception. What exactly is meant by saying that the succession in our experience is an illusory appearance of a timeless reality? This would be (I think) that in reality our experience of reality is a timeless series of terms which do not really succeed one another, but only appear to do so. This implies not only (i) that there is a non-successive real world which appears successive, but also (ii) that there is a non-successive knowledge which appears successive. Not only is reality unfolded to us successively; our knowledge of reality is also unfolded similarly. Now I suggest that this notion of a timeless knowledge appearing temporal is perfectly non-sensical, and I shall proceed to say why I think so.

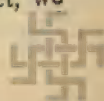
8. It is obvious to begin with that there can be no knowledge without a knower. If then there is a timeless knowledge of the timeless things-in-themselves, there must be a knower who knows them timelessly. Whether there is anywhere such a knower is not easy to say. In any case it seems fairly certain that none of us is such a subject, for our mode of knowledge is obviously successive. But it is suggested that our self has two aspects, one empirical and the other transcendental, of which the first is temporal and knows temporally, whereas the second is timeless and knows time-



lessly. The transcendental self is the self as it really is in itself, whereas the empirical self is the same self as it appears. Now I wish to suggest that this distinction between the transcendental self and the empirical self is untenable for the following reasons.

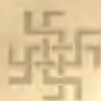
9. The distinction between appearance and reality is one which seems fairly obvious when applied to objects. It is easy to understand how an object may appear differently from what it is, for many things do so appear. For example, a straight stick partly immersed in water looks bent. But this distinction seems to me to be totally inapplicable to the subject. The transcendental self is the self as it really is; and the empirical self is the self as it appears. But appears to whom? For we must remember that appearance is a three-term relation requiring not only (i) the thing which appears and (ii) what this thing appears as, but also (iii) the subject to whom it appears. Now which is the third term of this relation in the present case? To whom does the transcendental self appear as empirical? Not to the transcendental self surely, for this is the self as it really is and this self must perceive reality as it is, for it has been postulated for this very purpose. Just because the self as it is known to us is incapable of apprehending reality as it is (i.e., as eternal), the transcendental self is invoked by us. And it cannot be to the empirical self, for the empirical self is what the transcendental self appears as, not what it appears to. In other words, it is the second term of the relation of appearance and not the third. It is thus obvious that in the absence of the third term there can be no appearance of the transcendental self. It would seem therefore that there is no self other than the one with which we are familiar and which perceives things successively. But if there is no transcendental self which knows things timelessly, then the succession in experience cannot be explained as the appearance of a timeless reality, and must be admitted to be an irreducible fact.

10. This suggests two reflections. (i) If we are willing to accept succession in experience (and this we have seen to be unavoidable), then the reason for declaring succession in nature to be an appearance of a timeless reality vanishes. For if we are going to accept succession ultimately, there is nothing to be gained by merely postponing the admission to a later stage. Since succession in experience must be accepted as an irreducible fact, we might as well accept succession in nature itself.





11. The second reflection is the following. (ii) When it is realised that we are forced to accept succession in spite of the alleged contradictions involved in it, I think that much of the breeziness with which those contradictions were welcomed by the unrealists will vanish and they will be disposed to be somewhat more critical of them. It is possible that instead of rejoicing in contradictions, they may want to get rid of them; and if in this frame of mind, they look about for likely solutions, they will discover that several perfectly respectable solutions of those difficulties have already been given. It is not unlikely that some of those solutions might carry conviction.



## A Note on Jung's Conception of Psyche

by

K. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

*Andhra University*

The Behaviourist's analysis of man's mental life into reflexes and reflex arcs and the mechanistic interpretation of human mind as an assemblage of images resulted in a gross misunderstanding of human behaviour. The forms of behaviour which are peculiarly man's own were deliberately ignored and the basic fountains of psychic life, the foundations of human personality, were forgotten in the oblivion of the materialistic and mechanistic reality. Psycho-therapeutic phenomena have thrown a flood of light on the reality of the subliminal forces of our personality that were hitherto eclipsed under the mechanistic dogma. Psycho-analytic studies have shown how the picture of reality may be distorted by the instinctive drives and complexes that lie beyond the threshold of consciousness.

Freudian recognition of the unconscious functioning of our personality failed, however, to fathom the deeper and more potential factors in human personality, as the real nature and the actual scope of the unconscious were missed in the abyss of sex-psychology. It was left to Jung to postulate better concepts to signify the extensive fields of our psychic life. He does it not only by recognising the unconscious forces of our personality but also by extending the frontiers of the unconscious to a limitless extent.

Jung's conception of *psyche* is based on a better appreciation of the unconscious and its functions. The unconscious for him is not a store-house of repressed complexes and forgotten experiences; on the contrary it is the source of our instinctive drives and a basis for a collective approach to our social and moral problems.

Jung distinguishes three kinds of mental levels—conscious, personal unconscious and collective unconscious. Psyche comprises of both the conscious and the unconscious processes. The unconscious contents of our psyche may be personal or collective. The former belongs to the individual, whereas the latter is common to the whole of mankind. The personal unconscious consists



of the repressed material,—subliminal perceptions and forgotten experiences. The collective unconscious which is a totality of *archetypes* expresses itself mostly in phantasies and occasionally in dreams. Archetypes are something like the “organs of pre-rational psyche.”<sup>1</sup> They are, in other words, “pre-existing forms of apprehension,” the great “primordial images.” These archetypes, according to Jung, are potentially latent in the brain-structure which is almost the same in all human beings. The formation of archetypes is due to the recurring experiences of life, and they signify the varied experiences of our remote ancestors.

In Jung’s analytical psychology the psyche enjoys a full-fledged reality, having its own structure and being subject to its own laws. It is not a secondary manifestation, an epiphenomenon, but a factor *sui generis*.<sup>2</sup> The mind of a new-born child is not a *tabula rasa*. “The unconscious psyche of the child”, says Jung, “is truly limitless in extent and of incalculable age.”<sup>3</sup> It consists of an enormous range of things, and is overpowered with a panorama of age-long facts, primordial images and mythological themes. That such things exist in the child’s psyche is evident from his dreams which are strikingly mythological and full of meaning.

The conscious personality which consists of ideas that are directly connected with the ego is the superstructure based on the foundation of the collective psyche. “By virtue of its indefinite extension the unconscious might be compared to the sea, while consciousness is like an island rising in its midst.”<sup>4</sup> Ideas which have lost their intensity sink into the unconscious, while new ideas emerge out of the collective psyche. “The unconscious is the matrix out of which consciousness grows.”<sup>5</sup> Thus the so-called individuality of a person is nothing but an “excerpt of collective psyche.”<sup>6</sup> The *persona* is only the mask of the impersonal unconscious, “a mask which simulates individuality making others and

1. C. G. Jung: *Psychological Reflections*: Edited by Joland Jacobi. Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., London, 1953, p. 36.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

3. *Development of Personality*: The collected works of C. G. Jung, 17. Trs. R. F. C. Hull. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1954, p. 45.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

6. C. G. Jung: *Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology*, Trs. C. E. Long. Baillier, Tindall and Cox. London, 1922, p. 457.



oneself believe that one is individual, whilst one is acting a part through which the collective psyche speaks."<sup>7</sup>

Though it would appear that according to Jung there is no dichotomy of the conscious and unconscious personality, as, he believes, the former is only an excerpt of the latter, still analytical psychology attributes dual functioning to the psyche. The psyche according to Jung "is not an indivisible unity but more or less a divided totality."<sup>8</sup> The duality of psychic functioning occurs at two levels—the individual or the ego-level and the collective or impersonal level.

The ego according to Jung consists of *record-images* resulting from sensations and feelings, and images of past experience. Ego and consciousness are so interconnected that it is impossible to conceive of the one without the other. Sensations received from the different parts of the nervous system and the images of different times cohere together to form a conscious experience, because consciousness acts as a cohesive force to unite the different images that result in an experience of the ego. Consciousness acts as a sort of "gravitational force" to bring together those processes and contents that make up an experience of the ego.<sup>9</sup> Jung also speaks of the ego-complex which forms the centre of our individuality.

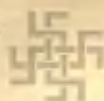
Now Jung's conception of psyche may be summarised as follows. Psyche comprises of both the conscious and the unconscious processes of our personality. The conscious factors group themselves round the ego, while the unconscious archetypes are kept alive in the collective psyche. The so-called individuality with its ego-consciousness is the development based essentially on the collective psyche.

The following problems arise out of Jung's conception of the psyche,—the nature and the origin of archetypes and the way in which all sensory and memory images group round the ego. Jung disposes of any questions relating to the beginning of psychic structure as metaphysical. But the problem arises: how are the

7. *Ibid.*

8. C. G. Jung: *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, Trs. H. C. and Cary F. Bayners. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London, 1928, p. 256.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 82.





archetypes able to find a place in the human psyche? Jung's argument that they are inherited in the brain-structure is thoroughly inconsistent with his conception of the psyche. It is understandable how ideas can be transmitted from one generation to another, unless the archetypes are assumed to be inherently capable of existing without being associated with any material substance. Again it is difficult to follow Jung when he says that consciousness acts as a cohesive force in the realm of the ego. Consciousness is only a manifestation of the ego, and coherence in the ego cannot be explained by its manifestations. Broad's "Compound theory" which is also known as two-factor theory enunciated in his *Mind and its Place in Nature* seems to supply the missing links in Jung's conception of the psyche.

According to Broad the mind is not a single substance. It is a compound of two substances neither of which has the characteristics of the mind. The elements that interact in order to form the compound, the mind, are the 'psychic factor' and the 'bodily factor'. Perception, reasoning, remembering etc., are the joint functions of the psychic and bodily factors. Consciousness is not a manifestation of the psychic factor as such, on the contrary it is the property of mind which is the compound of psychic and bodily factors.<sup>10</sup>

Jung is right when he says "body and soul are not two entities but one and the same life",<sup>11</sup> for one cannot function without the other. This is again consistent with his statement that "being that has soul is living being."<sup>12</sup> The psyche is truly limitless in extent, but our mind is only connected with a very small portion of the psychic factor. The structure of the psychic factor and the processes that go on within it are not comprehensible to the human mind, for the psychic factor is outside the realm of mind and knows nothing about the space-time categories within whose frame-work the whole of mind's experiences are organised. The archetypes may be regarded as the impressions cast on the psychic portions outside the region of the mind capable of forcing themselves occasionally into consciousness.

Thus the following new and meaningful conceptions emerge out of the discussion. Mind is the field of bodily interaction with

10. C. D. Broad: *Mind and Its Place in Nature*. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London, 1929.

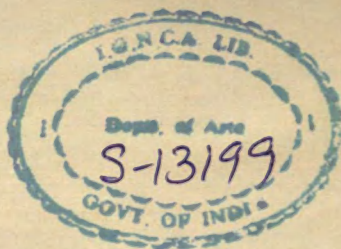
11. C. G. Jung: *Psychological Reflections*, p. 5.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 17.



the psyche (psychic factor). Consciousness manifests itself whenever there is an association between the brain and the nervous system on the one hand and the psyche on the other. Ego is the self-consciousness which is the result of the identity of the bodily factor with the psychic factor. Archetypes are the impressions which the psyche carries of the previous minds. Multiple personality is due to the bodily interaction at two unconnected regions in the psyche.

This appears to me a legitimate and intelligible way of understanding the psyche and its constituents. The field of psychology as we know it today confines itself to the mind, viz. the region of bodily interaction with the psyche. Parapsychology is, however, endeavouring to bring out facts relating to the other portions of the psyche. Psyche is a field yet to be explored. It opens out an immense field of investigation. In order to unravel the mysteries of human mind, ESP or any paranormal phenomena, we have to concern ourselves with the psyche that is beyond the conscious mind.





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